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BY H. RIDER HAGGARD,
AUTHOR OF 'KING SOLOMON'S MINES' ETC.

CHAPTER X.

JOHN HAS AN ESCAPE.

ON the following Monday, John, taking Jantjé to drive him, departed in a rough Scotch cart, to which were harnessed two of the best horses at Mooifontein, to shoot buck at Hans Coetzee's.

He reached the place at about half-past eight, and concluded, from the fact of the presence of several carts and horses, that he was not the only guest. Indeed, the first person that he saw as the cart pulled up was his late enemy, Frank Muller.

'Kek [look], Baas,' said Jantjé, 'there is Baas Frank talking to a Basutu!'

John was, as may be imagined, not best pleased at this meeting. He had always disliked the man, and since Muller's conduct on the previous Friday, and Jantjé's story of the dark deed of blood in which he had been the principal actor, he positively loathed the sight of him. He got out of the cart, and was going to walk round to the back of the house in order to avoid him, when Muller, to all appearance, suddenly became aware of his presence, and advanced to meet him with the utmost cordiality.

'How do you do, Captain?' he said, holding out his hand, which John just touched. 'So you have come to shoot buck with Om Coetzee; going to show us Transvaalers how to do it, eh? There, Captain, don't look as stiff as a rifle barrel. I know what

you are thinking of: that little business at Wakkerstroom on Friday, is it not? Well, now, I tell you what it is, I was in the wrong, and I ain't afraid to say so as between man and man. I had had a glass, that was the fact, and did not quite know what I was about. We have got to live as neighbours here, so let us forget all about it and be brothers again. I never bear malice, not I. It is not the Lord's will that we should bear malice. Hit out from the shoulder, I say, and then forget all about it. If it hadn't been for that little monkey,' he added, jerking his thumb in the direction of Jantjé, who was holding the horses' heads, 'it would never have happened, and it is not nice that two Christians should quarrel about such as he.'

Muller jerked out this long speech in a succession of sentences, something as a schoolboy repeats a hardly learnt lesson, fidgeting his feet and letting his restless eyes travel about the ground as he did so; and it was evident to John, who stood quite still and listened to it in icy silence, that it was by no means an extemporary one. It had too clearly been composed for the occasion.

'I do not wish to quarrel with anybody, Meinheer Muller,' he answered at length. 'I never do quarrel unless it is forced on me, and then,' he added grimly, 'I do my best to make it unpleasant for my enemy. The other day you attacked first my servant and then myself. I am glad that you now see that this was an improper thing to do, and, so far as I am concerned, there is an end of the matter,' and he turned to enter the house.

Muller accompanied him as far as where Jantjé was standing at the horses' heads. Here he stopped, and, putting his hand in his pocket, took out a two-shilling piece and threw it to the Hottentot, calling to him to catch it.

Jantjé was holding the horses with one hand. In the other he held his stick—a long walking kerrie that he always carried, the same on which he had shown Bessie the notches. In order to catch the piece of money he dropped the stick, and Muller's quick eye catching sight of the notches beneath the knob, he stooped down, picked it up, and examined it.

'What do these mean, boy?' he asked, pointing to the line of big and little notches, some of which had evidently been cut years ago.

Jantjé touched his hat, spat upon the 'Scotchman,' as the

natives of that part of Africa call a two-shilling piece,¹ and pocketed it before he answered. The fact that the giver had murdered all his near relations did not make the gift less desirable in his eyes. Hottentot moral sense is not very elevated.

'No, Baas,' he said with a curious grin, 'that is how I reckon. If anybody beats Jantjé, Jantjé cuts a notch upon the stick, and every night before he goes to sleep he looks at it and says, "One day you will strike that man twice who struck you once," and so on, Baas. Look what a line of them there are, Baas. One day I shall pay them all back again, Baas Frank.'

Muller abruptly dropped the stick, and followed John towards the house. It was a much better building than the Boers generally indulge in, and the sitting-room, though innocent of flooring—unless clay and cowdung mixed can be called a floor—was more or less covered with mats made of springbuck skins. In the centre of the room was a table made of the pretty 'buck-enhout' wood, which has the appearance of having been industriously pricked all over with a darning-needle, and round it were chairs and couches made of stinkwood, and seated with rimpis or strips of hide.

In one big chair at the end of the room, busily employed in doing nothing, sat Tanta [Aunt] Coetzee, the wife of Old Hans, a large and weighty woman, who had evidently once been rather handsome; and on the couches were some half-dozen Boers, their rifles in their hands or between their knees.

It struck John as he entered that some of these did not look best pleased to see him, and he thought he heard one young fellow, with a hang-dog expression of face, mutter something about the 'damned Englishman' to his neighbour rather more loudly than was necessary to convey his sentiments. However, old Coetzee came forward to greet him heartily enough, and called to his daughters—two fine girls, very smartly dressed for Dutch women—to give the Captain a cup of coffee. Then John made the rounds after the Boer fashion, and beginning with the old lady in the chair, received a lymphatic shake of the hand from every single soul in the room. They did not rise—it is not customary to do so—they merely extended their paws, all of them more or less damp, and muttered the mystic monosyllable 'Daag.'

¹ Because once upon a time a Scotchman made a great impression on the simple native mind in Natal by palming off some thousands of florins among them at the nominal value of half-a-crown.

short for good-day. It is a very trying ceremony till one gets used to it, and John pulled up panting, to be presented with a cup of hot coffee that he did not want, but which it would be rude not to drink.

‘The Captain is a rooibaatje,’ said the old lady ‘Aunt’ Coetzee interrogatively, and yet with the certainty of one who states a fact.

John signified that he was.

‘What does the Captain come to the “land” for? Is it to spy?’

The whole room listened attentively to their hostess’s question, and then turned their heads to listen for the answer.

‘No. I have come to farm with Silas Croft.’

There was a general smile of incredulity. Could a rooibaatje farm? Certainly not.

‘There are three thousand men in the British army,’ announced the old vrouw oracularly, and casting a severe glance at the wolf in sheep’s clothing, the man of blood who pretended to farm.

Everybody looked at John again, and awaited his answer in dead silence.

‘There are nearly a hundred thousand men in the regular British army, and as many more in the Indian army, and twice as many more volunteers,’ he said, in a rather irritated voice.

This statement also was received with the most discouraging incredulity.

‘There are three thousand men in the British army,’ repeated the old lady, in a tone of certainty that was positively crushing.

‘Yah, yah!’ chimed in some of the younger men in chorus.

‘There are three thousand men in the British army,’ she repeated for the third time in triumph. ‘If the Captain says that there are more he lies. It is natural that he should lie about his own army. My grandfather’s brother was at Cape Town in the time of Governor Smith, and he saw the whole British army. He counted them; there were exactly three thousand. I say that there are three thousand men in the British army.’

‘Yah, yah!’ said the chorus; and John gazed at this terrible person in bland exasperation.

‘How many men do you command in the British army?’ she interrogated after a solemn pause.

‘A hundred,’ said John sharply.

‘Girl,’ said the old woman, addressing one of her daughters,

'you have been to school and can reckon. How many times does one hundred go into three thousand?'

The young lady addressed giggled confusedly, and looked for assistance to a sardonic young Boer whom she was going to marry, who shook his head sadly, indicating thereby that these were mysteries into which it was not well to pry. Thrown on her own resources, the young lady plunged into the recesses of an intricate calculation, in which her fingers played a considerable part, and finally, with an air of triumph, announced that it went twenty-six times exactly.

'Yah, yah!' said the chorus, 'it goes twenty-six times exactly.'

'The Captain,' said the oracular old lady, who was rapidly driving John mad, 'commands a twenty-sixth part of the British army, and he says that he comes here to farm with Uncle Silas Croft. He says,' she went on, with withering contempt, 'that he comes here to farm when he commands a twenty-sixth part of the British army. It is evident that he lies.'

'Yah, yah!' said the chorus.

'It is natural that he should lie!' she continued; 'all Englishmen lie, especially the rooibaasje Englishman, but he should not lie so badly. It must vex the dear Lord to hear a man lie so badly, even though he be an Englishman and a rooibaasje.'

At this point John burst from the house, and swore frantically to himself as soon as he got outside; and, really, it is to be hoped that he was forgiven, for the provocation was not small. It is not pleasant to be universally set down not only as a 'leugenaar' [liar], but as one of the very feeblest order.

In another minute old Hans Coetzee came out and patted him warmly on the shoulder, in a way that seemed to say that, whatever others might think of the insufficiency of his powers of falsehood, he, for one, quite appreciated them, and announced that it was time to be moving.

Accordingly the whole party got into their carts or on to their shooting-horses, as the case might be, and started. Frank Muller was, John noticed, mounted as usual on his fine black horse. After driving for more than half an hour along an indefinite kind of waggon track, the leading cart, in which was old Hans Coetzee himself, a Malay driver, and a coloured Cape boy, turned to the left across the open veldt, and the others followed in turn. This went on for some time, till at last they reached the crest of a rise that commanded a large sweep of open country, and here Hans halted

and held up his hand, whereon the others halted too. On looking out over the vast plain before him John discovered the reason. About half a mile beneath them was a great herd of blesbuck feeding, three hundred or more of them, and beyond them again another herd of some sixty or seventy much larger and wilder-looking animals with white tails, which John at once recognised as vilderbeeste. Nearer to them again, dotted about here and there on the plain, were a couple of dozen or so of graceful yellow springbuck.

Then a council of war was held, which resulted in the men on horseback—among whom was Frank Muller—being despatched to circumvent the herds and drive them towards the carts, that took up their stations at various points, towards which the buck were likely to make.

Then came a pause of a quarter of an hour or so, till suddenly, from the far ridge of the opposite slope, John saw a couple of puffs of white smoke float up into the air, and one of the vilderbeeste below roll over on to his back, kicking and plunging furiously. Thereon the whole herd of buck turned and came thundering towards them, stretched in a long line across the wide veldt; the springbuck first, then the blesbuck, looking, owing to their peculiar way of holding their long heads down as they galloped, for all the world like a herd of great bearded goats. Behind and mixed up with them were the vilderbeeste, who twisted and turned, and jumped into the air as though they had gone clean off their heads and were next second going clean on to them. It is very difficult, owing to his extraordinary method of progression, to distinguish one part of a galloping vilderbeeste for another; now it is his horns, now his tail, and now his hoofs that present themselves to the watcher's bewildered vision, and now again they all seem to be mixed up together. On came the great herd, making the ground shake beneath their footfall: and after them galloped the mounted Boers, every now and again jumping from their horses to fire a shot into the line of game, which generally resulted in some poor animal being left sprawling on the ground, whereon the sportsmen would remount and continue the chase.

Presently the buck were within range of some of the guns in the carts, and a regular fusillade began. About twenty blesbuck turned and came straight past John, within forty yards of him. Springing to the ground he fired both barrels of his 'Express' at them as they tore past—alas and alas! without touching them. The first bullet struck under their bellies, the second must have

shaved their backs. Reloading rapidly, he fired again at about two hundred yards range, and this time one fell to his second barrel. But he knew that it was a chance shot: he had fired at the last buck, and he had killed one ten paces in front of him. The fact of the matter is that this sort of shooting is exceedingly difficult till one knows how to do it. The inexperienced hand firing across a line of buck will not generally kill one shot in twenty, as an infinitesimal difference in elevation, or the slightest error in judging distance—in itself a most difficult art on those great plains—will make the difference. A Boer almost invariably gets immediately behind a herd of running buck, and fires at one about half-way down the line. Consequently if his elevation is a little wrong, or if he has misjudged his sighting, the odds are that he will hit one either in front of or behind the particular animal fired at. All that is necessary is that the line of fire should be good. This John soon learnt, and when he had mastered the fact he became as good a game shot as the majority of Boers, but to-day being his first, he did not, much to his vexation, particularly distinguish himself, the result of which was that his friends the Dutchmen went away firmly convinced that the English rooibaatje shot as indifferently as he lied.

Jumping into the cart again, and leaving the dead blesbuck to look after itself for the present—not a very safe thing to do in a country where there are so many vultures—John, or rather Jantjé, put the horses into a gallop, and away they went at full tear. It was a most exciting mode of progression, bumping along furiously with a loaded rifle in his hands over a plain on which antheaps as large as an armchair were scattered like burnt almonds on a cake. Then there were the antbear holes to reckon with, and the little swamps in the hollows, and other agreeable surprises. But the rush and exhilaration of the thing was too great to allow him much time to think of his neck, so away they flew, sticking on to the cart as best they could, and trusting to Providence to save them from a complete smash up. Now they were bounding over an antheap, now one of the horses was on his nose, but somehow they always escaped the last dire disaster, thanks chiefly to the little Hottentot's skilful driving. Every few minutes or so they would pull up whenever the game was within range, and John would spring from the cart and let drive, and then jump in and follow on again. This went on for nearly an hour, in which time he had fired twenty-seven cartridges and killed three blesbuck

and wounded a vilderbeeste, which they proceeded to chase. But the vilderbeeste was struck in the rump, and a buck so wounded will go a long way, and go very fast also, and some miles of ground had been got over before he began to rest, only starting on again as they drew near. At last, on crossing the crest of a little rise, John saw what at first he took to be his vilderbeeste dead. A second look, however, showed him that, although it was a dead vilderbeeste, it most undoubtedly was not the one that he had wounded, for that was standing, its head hanging down, about one hundred and twenty yards beyond the other animal, which had, no doubt, fallen to somebody else's rifle, or else been wounded farther back and come here to die. Now the vilderbeeste lay within a hundred yards of them, and Jantjé pointed out to John that his best plan would be to get out of the cart and creep on his hands and knees up to the dead animal, from the cover of which he would get a good shot at his own wounded bull.

Accordingly Jantjé having withdrawn with the cart and horses out of sight under the shelter of the rise, John crouched upon his hands and knees and proceeded to carry out his stalk. He got on all right till he was quite close to the dead cow, and was just congratulating himself on the prospect of an excellent shot at the wounded bull, when suddenly something struck the ground violently just beneath his stomach, throwing up a cloud of earth and dust. He stopped amazed, and as he did so heard the report of a rifle somewhat to his right. It was a rifle bullet that had passed beneath him. Scarcely had he realised this when there was a sudden commotion in his hair, and the soft black felt hat that he was wearing started from his head, apparently of its own accord, and, after twirling round twice or thrice in the air, fell gently to the earth, and as it did so the sound of a second report reached his ears. It was now evident that somebody was firing at him; so, jumping up from his crouching position, he tossed his arms into the air and sprang and shouted in a way that left no mistake as to his whereabouts. In another minute he saw a man on horseback, cantering easily towards him, in whom he had little difficulty in recognising Frank Muller. He went and picked up his hat; there was a bullet-hole right through it. Then, full of wrath, he advanced to meet Frank Muller.

'What the —— did you mean by firing at me?' he asked.

'Allemachter, Carle!' [Almighty, my dear fellow] was the cool answer, 'I thought that you were a vilderbeeste calf. I galloped

the cow and killed her, and she had a calf with her, and when I got the cartridges out of my rifle—for one stuck and took me some time—and the new ones in, I looked up, and there, as I thought, was the calf. So I got my rifle on and let drive, first with one barrel and then with the other, and when I saw you jump up like that and shout, and that I had been firing at a man, I nearly fainted. Thank the Almighty I did not hit you.'

John listened coldly. 'I suppose that I am bound to believe you, Meinheer Muller,' he said. 'But I have been told that you have the most wonderful sight of any man in these parts, which makes it odd that at 300 yards you should mistake a man upon his hands and knees for a vilderbeeste calf.'

'Does the Captain think, then, that I wished to murder him; especially,' he added, 'after I took his hand this morning?'

'I don't know what I think,' answered John, looking straight into Muller's eyes, which fell before his own. 'All I know is that your curious mistake very nearly cost me my life. Look here!' and he took a lock of his brown hair out of the crown of his perforated hat and showed it to the other.

'Ay, it was very close. Let us thank God that you escaped.'

'It could not well have been closer, Meinheer. I hope that, both for your own sake and for the sake of the people who go out shooting with you, you will not make such a mistake again. Good morning!'

The handsome Boer, or Anglo-Boer, sat on his horse stroking his beautiful beard and gazing curiously after John Niel's sturdy English-looking figure as he marched towards the cart (for, of course, the wounded vilderbeeste had long ago vanished).

'I wonder,' he said to himself aloud, as he turned his horse's head and rode leisurely away, 'if the old volk are right after all, and if there is a God.' (Frank Muller was sufficiently impregnated with modern ideas to be a freethinker.) 'It almost seems like it,' he went on, 'else how did it come that the one bullet passed under his belly and the other just touched his head without harming him? I aimed carefully enough too, and I could make the shot nineteen times out of twenty and not miss. Bah, a God! I snap my fingers at him. Chance is the only god. Chance blows men about like the dead grass, till death comes down like the veldt fire and burns them up. But there are men who ride chance as one rides a young colt—ay, who turn its headlong rushing and rearing to their own ends—who let it fly hither and

thither till it is weary, and then canter it along the road that leads to triumph. I, Frank Muller, am one of those men. I never fail in the end. I will kill that Englishman. Perhaps I will kill old Silas Croft and the Hottentot too. Bah! they do not know what is coming. I know; I have helped to lay the mine; and unless they bend to my will I shall be the one to fire it. I will kill them all, and I will take Mooifontein, and then I will marry Bessie. She will fight against it, but that will make it all the sweeter. She loves that rooibaatje; I know it; and I will kiss her over his dead body. Ah! there are the carts. I don't see the Captain. Driven home, I suppose, on account of the shock to his nerves. Well, I must talk to those fools. Lord, what fools they are with their talk about the "land," and the "verdomde Britische Gouvernement." They don't know what is good for them. Silly sheep, with Frank Muller for a shepherd! Ay, and they shall have Frank Muller for a president one day, and I will rule them too. Bah! I hate the English; but I am glad that I am half English for all that, for that is where I get the brains! But these people—fools, fools. Well, I shall pipe and they shall dance!'

'Baas,' said Jantjé to John, as they were driving homewards, 'Baas Frank shot at you.'

'How do you know that?' asked John.

'I saw him. He was stalking the wounded bull, and not looking for a calf at all. There was no calf. He was just going to fire at the wounded bull when he turned and saw you, and he knelt down on one knee and covered you, and before I could do anything he fired, and then when he saw that he had missed you he fired again, and I don't know how it was he did not kill you, for he is a wonderful shot with a rifle, he never misses.'

'I will have the man tried for attempted murder,' said John, bringing the butt-end of his rifle down with a bang on to the bottom of the cart. 'A villain like that shall not go scot-free.'

Jantjé grinned. 'It is no use, Baas. He would get off, for I am the only witness. A jury won't believe a black man in this country, and they would never punish a Boer for shooting at an Englishman. No, Baas, you should lie up one day in the veldt where he is going to pass and shoot him. That is what I would do if I dared.'

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE BRINK.

FOR a few weeks after John Niel's adventure at the shooting-party no event of any importance occurred at Mooifontein. Day followed day in charming monotony, for, whatever 'gay worldlings' may think, monotony is as full of charm as a dreamy summer afternoon. 'Happy is the country that has no history,' says the voice of wisdom, and the same remark may be made with even more truth of the individual. To get up in the morning and feel that one is full of health and strength, to pursue the common round and daily task till the evening, and finally to go to bed pleasantly tired and sleep the sleep of the just, is the true secret of happiness. Fierce excitements, excursions, and alarms do not conduce either to mental or physical well-being, and it is for this reason that we find that those whose lives have been chiefly concerned with them crave the most after the quiet round of domestic life. When they get it they generally, it is true, pant for the ardours of the fray whereof the dim and distant sounds are echoing through the spaces of their heart, in the same way that the countries without a history are always anxious to write one in their own blood; but then that is a principle of nature which will allow of no standing still among her subjects, and has ordained that strife of one sort or another shall be the absolute condition of existence.

On the whole, John found that the life of a South African farmer came well up to his expectations. He had ample occupation; indeed, what between ostriches, horses, cattle, sheep, and crops, he was rather over than under occupied. Nor was he greatly troubled by the lack of civilised society, for he was a man who read a great deal, and books could be ordered from Durban and Cape Town, while the weekly mail brought up an ample supply of papers. On Sundays he always read the political articles in the 'Saturday Review' aloud to old Silas Croft, who, as he got older, found that the print tried his eyes, and this was an attention that the old gentleman greatly appreciated. He was a well-informed man, and had, notwithstanding his long life spent in a half-civilised country, never lost his hold of affairs or his interest in the wide and rushing life of the world in one of whose side eddies he lived apart. This task of reading the 'Saturday Review' aloud had formerly been a part of Bessie's Sunday service, but her uncle was very glad to

effect an exchange. Bessie's mind was not quite in tune with the profundities of that journal, and her attention was apt to wander at the most pointed passages. And thus it came about, what between the 'Saturday Review' and other things, that a very warm and deep attachment sprang up betwixt the old man and his younger partner. John was a very taking man, especially to the old, for whom he was never tired of performing little services. One of his favourite sayings was that old people should be 'let down easy,' and he acted up to it. Moreover, there was a quiet jollity and a bluff honesty about him which was undoubtedly attractive both to men and women. But his great recommendation was that he was a well-informed, experienced man and a gentleman, in a country in which both were rare. Every week the old man got to rely more and more on him, and let things pass more and more into his hands.

'I'm getting old, Niel,' he said to him one night; 'I'm getting very old; the grasshopper is becoming a burden to me: and I'll tell you what it is, my boy,' laying his hand affectionately upon John's shoulder, 'I have no son of my own, and you will have to be a son to me, as my dear Bessie has been a daughter.'

John looked up into the kindly, handsome old face, crowned with the fringe of snowy hair, and at the two keen eyes set deep in it beneath the overhanging eyebrows, and thought of his old father who was long since dead; and somehow he was moved, and his own eyes filled with tears.

'Ay, Mr. Croft,' he said, taking the old man's hand, 'that I will to the best of my ability.'

'Thank you, my boy, thank you. I don't like talking much about these things, but, as I said, I am getting old, and the Almighty may require my account any day, and if he does I rely on you to look after these two girls. It is a wild country this, and one never knows what may happen in it from day to day, and they will want it. Sometimes I wish I were clear of the place. And now I'm going to bed. I am beginning to feel as though I had done my day's work in the world. I'm getting feeble, John, that is the fact of it.'

After that he always called him John.

Of Jess they heard but little. She wrote every week, it is true, and gave an accurate account of all that was going on at Pretoria and of her daily doings, but she was one of those people whose letters tell one absolutely nothing of themselves and of what is passing

in their minds. They might as well have been headed 'Our Pretoria Letter,' as Bessie said disgustedly after reading through three sheets in Jess's curious, upright handwriting. 'Once you lose sight of Jess,' she went on, 'she might as well be dead for all you learn about her. Not that one learns very much when she is with one,' she added reflectively.

'She is a peculiar woman,' said John thoughtfully. At first he had missed her very much, for, peculiar as she undoubtedly was, she had touched a new string in him somewhere, of the existence of which he had not till then been himself aware. And what is more, it had answered pretty strongly for some time; but now it was slowly vibrating itself into silence again, much as a harp does when the striker takes his fingers from the strings. Had she stayed on another week or so the effect might have been more enduring.

But although Jess had gone away Bessie had not. On the contrary, she was always about him, surrounding him with that tender care a woman, however involuntarily, cannot prevent herself from lavishing on the man she loves. Her beauty moved about the place like a beam of light about a garden, for she was indeed a lovely woman, and as pure and good as she was lovely. Nor could John long remain in ignorance of her partiality for him. He was not a vain man—very much the reverse, indeed—but neither was he a fool. And it must be said that, though Bessie never overstepped the bounds of maidenly reserve, nor did she take particular pains to hide her preference. Indeed, it was too strong to permit of her doing so. Not that she was animated by the half-divine, soul-searing breath of passion, such as animated her sister, which is a very rare thing, and, take it altogether, as undesirable and unsuitable to the ordinary conditions of this prosaic and work-a-day life as it is rare. But she was tenderly and truly in love after the ordinary-young-womanly fashion; indeed, her passion, measured by the every-day standard, would have proved to be a deep one. However this was, she was undoubtedly prepared to make John Niel a faithful and a loving wife if he chose to ask her to become so.

And as the weeks went on—though, of course, he knew nothing of all this—it became a very serious question to John whether he should not ask her. It is not good for man to live alone, especially in the Transvaal, and it was not possible for him to pass day by day at the side of so much beauty and so much grace without thinking that it would be well to draw the bond of union

closer. Indeed, had John been a younger man or had less experience, he would have succumbed to the temptation much sooner than he did. But he was neither very young nor very inexperienced. Ten years or more ago, in his green and gushing youth, he had, as has been said, burnt his fingers pretty sharply, and a lively recollection of this incident in his career had heretofore proved a very efficient warning to him. Also, he had got to that period of life when men think a great many times before they wildly commit themselves to the deep matrimonial waters. At three-and-twenty most of us are willing, for the sake of a pretty face, to undertake the serious and in many cases overwhelming burdens, risks, and cares of family life, and the responsibility of the parentage of a large and healthy brood, but at three-and-thirty we take a different view of the matter. The temptation may be great, but the per contra list is so very alarming, and we never know even then if we see all the liabilities. Such are the black thoughts that move in the breasts of selfish men, to the great disadvantage of the marriage market; and however it may lower John Niel in the eyes of those who take the trouble to follow this portion of his life's history, it must, in the interests of truth and fact, be confessed that he was not free from them. The fact of the matter was that, sweet as Bessie was and pretty as she was, he was not violently in love with her; and one requires at thirty-four to be violently in love to rush into the near risk of matrimony. But, however commendably cautious a man may be, he is always liable to be thrown into temptation sufficiently strong to sweep away his caution and make a mockery of his plans. However strong the rope, it has its breaking strain; and in the same way our power of resistance to any given course depends entirely upon the power of the temptation to draw us into it. And so it was destined to be with our friend John Niel.

It was about a week after his conversation with old Silas Croft that it occurred to John that Bessie's manner had grown rather strange of late. It seemed to him that she had avoided his society instead of, if not courting it, at least showing a certain partiality for it. Also, she had been looking pale and worried, and evinced a tendency to irritation that was quite foreign to her natural sweetness of disposition. Now, when a person on whom one is accustomed to depend for most of that social intercourse and those pleasant little amenities that members of one sex value from another, suddenly cuts off the supply without any apparent rhyme

or reason, it is enough to induce a feeling of wonder, not to say of vexation, in the breast. It never occurred to John that the reason might be that Bessie was truly fond of him, and perhaps unconsciously disappointed that he did not show a warmer interest in her. If, however, we were to examine into the facts of the case we should probably discover that this was the real explanation of the change. Bessie was a straightforward young woman, whose mind and purposes were as clear as running water. She was vexed with John—though she would probably not have owned it even to herself in so many words—and her manner reflected the condition of her mind.

‘Bessie,’ said John one lovely day, just as the afternoon was merging into evening, ‘Bessie’—he always called her Bessie now—‘I am going down to the black wattle plantation by the big mealie patch. I want to see how those young trees are doing. If you have done your cooking’—for Bessie had been engaged in making a cake, as young ladies, to their souls’ health, often have to do in the colonies—‘I wish you would put on your hat and come with me. I don’t believe that you have been out to-day.’

‘Thank you, Captain Niel, I don’t think that I want to come out.’

‘Why not?’ he said.

‘Oh, I don’t know—because there is too much to do. If I go out that stupid girl will burn the cake,’ and she pointed to a Kafir intombi [young girl] who, arrayed in a blue smock, a sweet smile, and a feather stuck in her wool, was vigorously employed in staring at the flies on the ceiling and sucking her black fingers. ‘Really,’ she added with a little stamp, ‘one needs the patience of an angel to put up with that girl’s stupidity. Yesterday she smashed the biggest dinner-dish and then brought me the pieces with a broad grin on her face, and asked me to “make them one” again. The white people were so clever, she said, it would be no trouble to me. If they could make the white plate once, and could make flowers grow on it, it would surely be easy to make it whole again. I did not know whether to laugh or cry or throw the pieces at her.’

‘Look here, young woman,’ said John, taking the sinning girl by the arm and leading her solemnly to the oven, which was opened to receive the cake; ‘look here, if you let that cake burn while the inkosikaas [lady chieftain] is away, when I come back I will cram you into the oven to burn with it. I cooked a girl like

that in Natal last year, and when she came out she was quite white !'

Bessie translated this fiendish threat, whereat the girl grinned from ear to ear and murmured 'Koos' [chief] in cheerful acquiescence. A Kafir girl on a pleasant afternoon is not troubled by the prospect of being baked at nightfall, which is a long way off, especially when it was John Niel who threatened the baking. The natives about Mooifontein had pretty well taken the measure of John's foot by this time. His threats were awful, but his performances were not great. Once, indeed, he had to have a regular stand-up fight with a great fellow who thought that he could on this account be taken advantage of, but after he had succeeded in administering a sound hiding to that champion he was never again troubled in this respect.

'Now,' he said, 'I think we have provided for the safety of your cake, so come on.'

'Thank you, Captain Niel,' answered Bessie, looking at him in a bewitching little way she well knew how to assume, 'thank you, but I think I had rather not go out walking.' This was what she said, but her eyes added, 'I am offended with you; I want to have nothing to do with you.'

'Very well,' said John; 'then I suppose I must go alone,' and he took up his hat with the air of a martyr.

Bessie looked through the open kitchen door at the lights and shadows that chased each other across the swelling bosom of the hill behind the house.

'It certainly is very fine,' she said; 'are you going far?'

'No, only round the plantation.'

'There are so many puff-adders down there, and I hate snakes,' suggested Bessie, by way of finding another excuse for not coming.

'Oh, I'll look after the puff-adders—come along.'

'Well,' she said at last, as she slowly unrolled her sleeves, which had been tucked up during the cake-making, and hid her beautiful white arms, 'I will come, not because I want to come, but because you have over-persuaded me. I don't know what has come to me,' she added, with a little stamp and a sudden filling of her blue eyes with tears, 'I do not seem to have any will of my own left. When I want to do one thing and you want me to do another it is I who have to do what you want; and I tell you I don't like it, Captain Niel, and I shall be very cross out walking;' and she swept past him, on her way to fetch her hat, in that peculiarly graceful way

that angry women can sometimes assume, and left him reflecting that he never saw a more charming or taking lady in Europe or out of it.

He had half a mind to risk it and ask her to marry him. But then, perhaps, she might refuse him, and that was an idea that he did not quite take to. After our first youth few men altogether relish the idea of putting themselves in a position that gives a capricious woman an opportunity of first figuratively jumping on them, and then perhaps holding them up to the scorn and obloquy of her friends, relations, and other admirers. For, unfortunately, until the opposite is clearly demonstrated, many men are apt to believe that not a few women are by nature capricious, shallow, and unreliable; and John Niel, owing, possibly, to that unhappy little experience of his youth, must be reckoned among their misguided ranks.

(To be continued.)

DIAMONDS.

'I'll sing you a song of a diamond so fine.'—*Old Ballad.*

'A jewel may rest on an English lady's arm that saw Alaric sack Rome, and beheld before—what not? The treasures of the palaces of the Pharaohs and of Darius, or the camp of the Ptolemies, come into Europe on the neck of a vulgar proconsul's wife, to glitter at every gladiator's butchery in the amphitheatre; then pass in a Gothic ox-waggon to an Arab seraglio at Seville; and so back to its native India, to figure in the peacock throne of the Great Mogul; to be bought by an Armenian for a few rupees from an English soldier; and so at last come hither.'

THERE was once a young lady of good family—in fact, a princess—from whose pretty lips fell diamonds, both in speaking and in singing, and even in silence, when she merely smiled. Everybody knows her, many have seen her, though, to tell the truth, she has long dwelt in a world apart—in a world of merry tailors, of cobblers with shrewish wives, of foolish gooseherds, of old women with blue-checked handkerchiefs and wonderful tinderboxes. Everybody loves her; and many, as we say, have seen her in her simple diadem and her graceful diaphanous robes. Even Miss Grewsome, the governess, has no particular objection to her. They read about her in the schoolroom when they have finished their work with the principal rivers of Europe. '*From whose pretty lips fell diamonds,*' echoes Miss Grewsome; very likely, very possible; there is nothing there for the man of science to object to. For consider, George and Mary, into what does the diamond blaze, when, on combustion, the spirit of the gem leaps upward home again to its parent, the sun; into what but carbonic-acid gas?—that *carbon-dioxide* of the chemists which attends the combustion of every fire and gas-burner, the decomposition of every vegetable, which is exhaled in every breath we breathe. Sensible Miss Grewsome! Silly, credulous little princess! For when your hero, the prince, told you in his agreeable manner that your pretty talk was diamonds, you were, after all, doing no more than that which every gas-stove, every dying cabbage, does, and, in so doing, neither claims nor receives any special praise or blame.

The diamond is ordinarily an octohedron; in plainer language, as a rule, has eight sides. There is a certain difficulty for us in

considering as to on which of those eight sides we had best attack the precious stone. Shall we, for example, put it baldly in this form?

DIAMOND:

Composition	Pure carbon.
Specific gravity	3.52 to 3.53.
Hardness	Ten.
System of crystallisation	Isometric or cubical.
Form of crystal	Octohedron, rhombic dodecahedron, hexakis octohedron, &c., &c.

Shall we ruthlessly bring the noblest part of gold, as Pliny and Aristotle believed it, down to simple charcoal? the possible Urim and Thummim to the soot of the kitchen chimney? or shall we keep our eyes fixed on the trembling drops, described of Homer in Juno's ear, the dull natural stones that clasped the mantle of Charlemagne? For Tamerlane, Cagliostro, Diocletian; the jew, the beauty, the high priest, the betting man, all are rayed from the blazing heart of the brilliant; and on each of its sides are scratched honour and shame, greed and glory, knavery, renown, merit, and imposture. Nay, passionless as it seems, it has in its day been a veritable drinker of blood; and half its sheen is stolen from the flash of scimitar and dagger. Hold it close to your ear and you will hear the *tzing!* of brazen cymbals, and the yells of a furious soldiery. What can we write, within limits so narrow, of a gem that is at once the firebrand of the universe, the guardian of sanity, the curer of disease, the happy influencer of love?

It is a pretty conceit that, as from the human soul there is radiance drawn by pain, so from the diamond is there light summoned by cutting. For many centuries, for all the childhood of the gem, it was blank and cold as a lump of gum-arabic. How long and painful a schooling! How in all those years the light must have striven to burst through the husk! to flash into the innumerable shattered sun-shafts of the brilliant! To draw a human parallel, does not the diamond seem like one of those dull Oliver Goldsmith boys, whose early days are clouded by obstinacy and stupidity, but who, in the workshop of the world, under the rough and enlarged thumbs of the polisher, flash one day on the bosoms of beautiful women and the hearts of heroes? 'Twas the only way, no doubt; for poverty and neglect, writes Richter, darkness and loneliness, what are they, after all, but the piercing of the maiden's ear, in which one day they hang a jewel?

The diamond of the ancients—how are we to regard it? It was like the sun, Jove's offspring, consecrated to all celestial uses. And it had its story; for Jove, anxious to make men oblivious of the days he had spent amongst them, turned to stone one Diamond of Crete, who alone of mortals remembered him. The Greeks called the crystal *ἀδάμας*, the indomptable, and found it only in Ethiopia, between the island Meroe and the temple of Mercury. Sometimes they speak of it as blue in colour, and sometimes they apply the same word to the metal used for their armour. They valued it, not for its light, of which they knew nothing, but for its excessive hardness, of which they pretended to know a great deal. Among the Jews it was dedicated to the tribe Zebulun; and from Exodus we learn how that in the four-square breast-plate, in the second row of precious stones that adorned it, there were fastened an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And again, in the seventeenth chapter of Jeremiah—‘The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond.’ It is worth noting that only the natural point of the diamond, and not that obtained by polishing, will cut glass. *Ἀδάμας* of the Greeks becomes, in the thirteenth century, the *diamas* of Albertus Magnus, from which the French *aimant*, a magnet, is indisputably derived—rather strangely derived, considering the disagreement supposed to exist between them. ‘There is such a disagreement,’ says Pliny, ‘between a diamond and a loadstone that it will not suffer the iron to be attracted; or, if the loadstone be put to it, and take hold of it, it will pull it away.’ No truer that, we may mention, than a great deal else Pliny has to say on the matter. On the subject of the *ἀδάμας*, the Latins are freer with us than the Greeks, and of them, notwithstanding some extravagances, Pliny gives us by far the fullest and best account. He mentions six varieties, of which he declares the Indian and Arabian to be the most valuable; and, writing at some length, how that they belonged only to kings, and the wealthiest only of them, how they took the place of property and descended like heirlooms, concludes with the observation ‘ita respuentes ictum, ut ferrum utrinque resultet, incudesque etiam ipsi dissiliant.’ And this hardness, supposed to be indomptable, he proposed to get the better of by granting liberty to any convict in the Roman prisons who with hammer and anvil could master it. There can be no doubt that to this published belief of Pliny's is due the loss of many a fine stone, tried on the anvil and found wanting in a virtue which the

diamond never has possessed—indestructibility. For of all the great gems of antiquity, none have descended to us. The only classic jewel we can at this moment recall is a Roman gold ring, in the British Museum, set with an octohedral diamond. And even in modern times Pliny has something to answer for. There was, for instance, not so long ago, a *savant de village*, who, inheriting from his wife's family a large diamond, could not—in the face of his Pliny's declaration that such fell only to the lot of kings, and not to many of them—could not believe that the legacy was not a crystal merely, or at most a white topaz. To a man who knew his Pliny so well, the difficulty was easily solved; for all he had to do was to try it on the anvil, and, if genuine, both anvil and hammer would fly, one up, the other down; and when they did neither one nor the other, but, instead, the diamond was shattered, the *savant* read in triumph to his *femme éplorée* the passage we have quoted above. Nor was it till there came a foolish jeweller by, who knew no Latin, but who purchased the *débris* at a high price—the rest is silence! Nor was it Pliny only who was at fault. There was Lucretius, too, who sang—

Adamantina saxa

Primâ acie constant, ictus contemnere sueta;

and Seneca who chanted—‘*nec secari adamas aut cædi vel deteri potest.*’ The diamond is hard, very hard, but by no means indestructible. There are other safer methods of testing its veracity than by stamping on it, or hammering it, or burning it in a crucible, or scratching glass with it. What they may be will be considered later in their place.

In the vast storehouse of the errors of the human intelligence, lying ticketed with astrology and other false and solemn humours, repose untouched now the magic virtues of precious stones. There once were carbuncles for poisons, jaspers for fevers, agates for bad eyes, carnelians for hæmorrhage; you once had Cicero with a ring that made him eloquent, and Edward the Confessor with another that cured epilepsy; saffron bags all, as Mr. Caxton might have described them, saffron bags at the pit of the stomach. Even St. Jerome attributed all kinds of virtues to the sapphire, solemnly declaring that it secured to its owner the favour of princes, disarmed his enemies, baffled the wizard's arts, liberated captives, and even appeased the wrath of the Deity himself. It is strange that, material as most of us are, our spirituality still

will assert itself, though perhaps somewhat foolishly, in the little superstitions with which many will prop and hedge their lives; from Walter Scott with his twiddling piece of string, and Schiller with his rotten apples, down to the maiden lady who won't look at the new moon through glass. As in all superstition there is, declares Lavater, something at bottom sound, so in the strange application of the diamond (for it appears husband and wife can be reconciled by it, by its mere application 'to the bad parts') one may surely see a glimpse of that modern method of producing silence, oblivion, forgiveness, by the mere production of a velvet case from Bond Street. Apply the glittering circlet to the malevolent eye, the click-clack tongue, even to the vulgar up-raised hand, and, depend upon it, profound peace in a Roman household, as here in Bayswater, was the result. Applied 'to the bad parts,' by Mr. Caudle, depend upon it his nightly rest would have been henceforth but little broken by those acrid references to Miss Prettyman.

The Syrians wore the stone as a safeguard against madness, and the Chaldeans, generally, as an amulet; even the water, in which the great jewel is dipped, will cure all imaginable diseases. Once, they say, the Czar Peter, when surrounded by Turks, owed his own and his army's safety to the fascinating and dazzling splendour of the Empress's diamonds, displayed Melanion-wise, we imagine, to give him time to get away; and the sanity and comfort of a Russian prince's declining years, the Prince Potemkin, were only assured by the contemplation of the magnificent gems which, in a youth and manhood of intrigue, he had managed to hoard together. And yet, with all these marvellous properties—this power of conferring health, beauty, riches, honour, good fortune, influence; this extraordinary hardness; this phosphorescence; this total insensibility to the action of all chemical reagents; the diamond, taken in hand by one who knows, can be cut by a common penknife. How like in that to certain human specimens, apparently intractable, adamantine, who, taken in hand by one who knows, can be cut, polished, turned to whatever shape, whatever angle, best pleases the cunning workman. And how yet more like us all in this, that there never yet has been found the stone in which there is not some trifling defect, some feathers, clouds, tiny flakes of sand. On the treatment of those flaws, of whatever kind they may be, mineral or human, hear the saintly Bishop of Geneva, Francis de Sales:—

All kinds of precious stones, cast into honey, become more brilliant thereby, each one according to its colour; and all persons become more acceptable in their vocation when they join devotion with it; household cares are thereby rendered tranquil, the love of husband and wife more sincere, the service of the prince more faithful, and all kinds of business more easy and pleasant.—*The Derout Life*.

It is fit that we write something of the diamond's home, that

region old

Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold,
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine.

We find the diamond in Central India, Sumatra, Borneo, the Ural Mountains, Australia, North America, the Brazils, the Cape of Good Hope, and even in a brook in Co. Fermanagh, Ireland. And in China—one must not forget China—where, in the district of the mountains of Chinkangling, Madame Meunier relates how the Chinamen wander in thick straw slippers through the sandy valleys, the dry watercourses; how the diamonds, rough and pointed, stick in the straw; how the slippers are burnt and the diamonds remain; and how the priests buy and doubtless suspend them, drilled and strung, in the joss-houses, that odd form of the *domus Dei* in the Chinese mouth. But, nowadays, diamonds are of scarcely any account except from India, the Brazils, and the Cape; and so, after a word or two for the others, it will be of those first that we shall chiefly write. From Matam, in Borneo, comes the largest known diamond in the world, of 367 carats (the Koh-i-nûr is only 106 carats), in the possession of the Rajah, a vassal of Holland, for which the Governor of Batavia offered in exchange two brigs of war, fully equipped and ammunitioned, and 32,000*l*. Refused, chiefly at the solicitation of the Rajah's faithful subjects, who were unwilling to lose a gem which has the property of curing their complaints—a gem, we may safely say, of the first water. The discovery in Sumatra only dates from 1840. A few stones are also found at Java at the foot of the Blue Mountains; but of all the islands Borneo is the only one where they have been dug out in any quantity, and, even there, there is a considerable difficulty in arriving at actual statements of fact, from the savage ill-humour displayed by the natives to any Europeans who show any curiosity on the subject. In June 1829 two of Van Humboldt's companions discovered diamonds on the western declivity of the Ural Mountains in Asiatic Russia, but though, since then, they have been frequently brought to the surface, it has never been in sufficient quantities to repay working. Where there is gold,

there, they say, are diamonds, and with gold they have ever been found; but the miners of California and Australia, better advised than those of Brazil, have never deserted the one for the other. So much for the humbler mines: let us now turn to Golconda, to Kimberley, and to Diamantina.

It was from the Indian mines—from the mine chiefly of Jumelpur, in Bengal—that Rome was supplied with diamonds, of which the high price is referred to by Gibbon in a quotation from a long catalogue of Eastern commodities, subject about the time of Alexander Severus to the payment of duties. But long before Rome was, were diamonds; for the Mahabaratta, the great epic poem of the Hindoos, written 1,500 years before Christ, speaks of them. The mine districts of India are chiefly three, where the hereditary miners divide the stones into: 1. *Brahmas* (pure water); 2. *Chedras* (honey-coloured); 3. *Vyseas* (cream-coloured); 4. *Sudras* (grey-white). The first district is that of Golconda, inaccurately described as a mine, more properly a city and fort, situate some distance from the mines, built for the protection of Hyderabad by the Nizam, who kept his jewels and disagreeable relatives there. Of the city itself, destroyed in 1690 by Aurengzeb, nothing remains but ruins, almost as vast as those of Nineveh and Babylon. Never were there any diamonds found there, but thither were carried all discovered in the district. It was visited by Tavernier, the travelling jeweller of Paris, in 1636, who brought from the neighbourhood—compared by him, with its sandy soil, its boulders and brushwood, to the environs of Fontainebleau—many fine stones, disposed of ultimately to Louis XIV. There were at this time three-and-twenty mines at work in the kingdom of Golconda, employing 60,000 miners of both sexes and all ages, and producing such stones as that one of 900 carats, presented in 1655 by Mirimgala to Aurengzeb. The second district is that comprised between the sacred river Godavari and the Mahanadi, which falls into the Gulf of Bengal close to Puri, where is the most holy temple of Djagannath. Here, too, came Tavernier in 1655, and here he describes how in January and February, when the water is low, the whole population takes to the river and works upwards towards the mountains of its rise. They can see the sand at the bottom and the pebbles, and there only they stay to search more closely where lie the *thunderstones* that tell them not far off is the flash of the diamond. And in other river mines, in March, when the fields call for no tillers of the soil, the

people take to rafts, and scraping the sand out from between the rocks, wash it carefully in the pools. They say that this Mahanadi is the Adamas river of the ancients, where, it is written, *they find diamonds in quantities.*

The third district is Bundelcund, the richest and surest of all, where is situate the renowned Pannah, the Panossa of Ptolemy. Let us look in on them at work here, one shadeless morning, twenty minutes' walk across the fields to a small flat surface covered with heaps of pebbles, between which cluster huge clumps of jasmine, whose thousand blossoms heavily scent the air. At the foot of a knoll, gently sloping, lie basking a few tattered soldiers; on the other side is a large well, on the lip of which creaks a wheel turned by four bullocks. This was once the most important diamond-field in the world, and now the only suggestion of animation and enterprise lies in the creaking of the wheel and the half a dozen coolies who trudge backwards and forwards, carrying on their heads baskets of rubbish. How different this from the feverish activity of Kimberley, the click and clatter of the thousand machines, the myriad buckets. These mines are still let by Government or the Rajah of the district to the wretched class who work them in the most primitive fashion, half-naked, for fear the governor should imagine them prosperous and rise in his demands. They declare the English conquest has irritated the tutelary deities of the soil, who have deserted the mines and ceased to plant them with precious stones; it is the best excuse they can make for their idleness and ignorance. In the Bundelcund district, if the revenue falls below a certain fixed sum, the Maharajah beheads a chief and confiscates his goods. He is cheated all the same, but he gets an actual share of one kind or another, which, without the making of an occasional example, would doubtless be denied him.

Benares is the great market for Indian stones; there, every April, is held a fair, where the merchants, none of them, as far as we can discover, older than twenty, meet and chaffer. This is all that is left of Golconda—a deserted fort, and all that is left of the three-and-twenty mines described by Tavernier. That there are diamonds still in India is very sure, but they will come to nothing till the Government grant long leases and the individual gives way to the company and machinery. Between the days of that great Mohammed Ghorî who left 400 lbs. weight of precious stones, the results of indiscriminate plunder, and 1725, when the Brazil mines

were discovered, there were no diamonds but Indian. In Brazil, the miners of Villa do Principe, seeking their gold in the sand of the torrents, would often come upon crystals of a peculiar shape, which they used for counters for cards, keeping the best for the governor of the town. They had the marked advantage of never getting the worse for wear. These, one Bernardino Fonseca Lobo, a monk of Serra do Frio, who had been to the Indies, recognised to be diamonds, and had them sent to Lisbon and thence to Amsterdam to be cut, whereby the Dutch minister secured the monopoly of the trade.

In 1729, on the report of Don Lorenzo de Almeida, the court at Lisbon announced officially the discovery of diamonds at the Brazils, and in 1730 the diamond-fields were declared royal property, and no diamonds sent to Europe but in royal ships. They were let out on leases, and the poor inhabitants driven away from their homes on the banks of the diamond rivers, pursued (declares the old historian) by thunder and lightning, drought, and a terrible earthquake; though, perhaps, these phenomena were aimed at the invaders, the poor inhabitants coming in for a share by accident. At any rate, when they came back, reinstated in their rightful possessions, the ground seemed strewn with jewels; children found them in the streets and in the brooks, at the roots of vegetables in the gardens, and even the poultry, *faute de mieux*, would eat them. It is said (again by the old historian) that diamond mines have their spring as they have their harvest, days of seed-time when bountiful nature lets fall from heaven the gems that have so long hung poised there. Who can tell, after all, but that diamonds are not fragments of some distant crystal world, shattered in the far blue, and dropped tinkling in a brilliant rain at cockcrow, shattered by the myriad hammers of a cloudy wreath of laughing cupids? And, as though to increase the value of her gift, the shower falls on spots so desolate, withered, blasted, that spring has long passed by them shuddering, and the years that are spent there seem, as Byron moans, all winter. It is strange that the countries producing the one, the diamond—the other, charcoal, should be, as far as their prosperity is concerned, almost in exact inverse ratio to the value of their production; for in one you have the busy and teeming surface of Belgium and England, and in the other the long bare veldt of the Cape, the neglected fields and barren watercourses of the Brazils.

In 1843 diamonds were discovered in the province of Bahia. There are two stories told of the discovery; one that a quick-eyed slave from Minas-Geraes, keeping his master's flock in Bahia, remarked the similarity of soil to that of his native place, and searching in the sand soon found seven hundred carats of diamonds. With these the faithful creature ran away, and attempted to make his fortune in a distant city by sale; but so valuable a property in the hands of a slave exciting suspicion, he was put to the question as to where they came from, and, refusing to answer, sent back to Bahia and his master. There, being watched, his secret was made clear, and within a twelvemonth there were five-and-twenty thousand seekers at work, securing for some time a daily amount of 1,450 carats. The other story is that of a mulatto miner in the interior, gold-washing in a stream at Sincora, whose crowbar slipping woke a hollow sound below; mother earth groaned, as it were, like a miser, at the discovery of her store; and pushing his hand through, the mulatto pulled out a handful of stones, valued subsequently at 100,000*l.* in that hole alone. Within six months 15,000 people were there, and in the first two years the product of their toil rose to half a million of money.

One might spend a great deal of time and space over the Brazils, if the Cape did not call to us; if that legend of *Ici sont des diamants* from the old French mission map of Griqualand West did not point us east. We might describe the mine of Tibago, looking like an old Kensington gravel-pit, dug out of the hillside, with its heaps of yellow unwashed earth; or the *riberon do inferno*, with its crazy wheel and slashing torrent and barren scarp of rocks; or the river washing at Lençoes, with the negroes knee-deep in the water and the overseer in white under a huge umbrella; or the mine of Canavieiras in the forest of Salobro among the tufted cocoanut palms, where the withering fever avenges the trouble of the virgin forest. We might draw little pictures of the negro washing the mud in his wooden trough, with its constant stream of water running through till nothing is left but sand and fine gravel, searching closer in which, as he finds the diamond, he is taught to stand up submissively and knock for the overseer. We might outline the honest fellow on a frieze, crowned with a wreath of flowers, and led in procession to the manager to receive his freedom for the finding of a ten-carat gem. See! they give him two new shirts, a suit of clothes, a hat, and a handsome knife; and see, on the reverse, how they beat with sticks and fasten iron

bands round the throat of the dusky knave who hides in his hair, his mouth, his ears, or between his fingers, the twinkling gem!

For a hundred and seventeen years the diamond lit up the secret mines of Griqualand West, undisturbed and unsuspected. The *Ici sont des diamants* of the French mission map of 1750 was held of no more account than *Here are many ostriches* would be, written across a gipsy map of the North Riding. The Bushmen, Corannas, Basoutos, Beljouanas, and Griquas had been used of old times, they and their fathers before them, to visit the rivers of Griqualand West for diamonds to bore their 'weighting stones,' but they knew no more what they were working with than did the miners of Villa do Principe when they played with them at cards. It was not till 1867 that the re-discovery was made and the first Cape diamond, of $21\frac{3}{10}$ carats in the rough, exhibited at the Paris Exhibition. Then the stones which had lain in the hands of the natives for centuries began to come forward, and, in the expressive language of the colony, Griqualand West was *rushed*.

It came about in this way. The scene is a Boer's farmhouse, where dwells Rip Van Winkle, not in a Sleepy Hollow, but within white walls, stark and staring on a ridge. Rip van Winkle is six feet three, with a flat face and dusty light hair, and the joints and thighs of some great beast before the Flood. He lives on lumps of mutton, and he sleeps from one till four, and again from eight till three, he and his family, on a large ground floor of unburned bricks, roofed with camel-thorn and adorned with labels of Colman's mustard and cod-liver oil. If he has any manners, they come to him from his French ancestry; for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes drove to the Cape many of the Huguenots of 1685, whose language only died out in the time of the grandfathers of the present owners of the *pans* and *kopjes*, round which to-day the buckets creak and the Kafirs chatter. Behind the dam for Rip van Winkle's sheep and cows, lies the melancholy garden of a few poor potatoes and onions; and two or three gum-trees close by the *kraal* where squat the Hottentot cow-boys; and all away to the distant low red hills the unbroken sheet of barrenness of the *karoo*, hot and yellow, with no shadow over it but the wing of the passing vulture, wheeling against the pale steel blue of the lurid sky; with at intervals, visible for miles, an aloe or a dwarf acacia, or a clump of cassia and the low creeping ice-plants with their coloured stars. Here, in this drowsy land, whose inhospitable shore is lined with dead sharks, whose trade was in those

days all the flawed and damaged articles of the world, all the salvage of the fire and wreck of the other hemisphere, dozed Rip van Winkle, without capital, without energy, his only ambition to pay the ancestral debts, to keep the moving sand-hills from bulging in his staring walls. And far, far in the distance, below the hills, great lakes of shining water, with trees upon the strand and breaks of lofty cane. For this old-new home of the diamond is the home as well of Morgana the Fay.

In such a farmhouse, with its large table and bureau bearing a Bible and two or three old Dutch books, and the clumsy rifle leaning in the corner, after the evening reading of a chapter in the Boer fashion, a trader, named Niekirk, who chanced to be present, told the *vrouw* Jacobs that the great white shining stones they had just been hearing of reminded him of the pebbles the children played with, picked up along the banks of the neighbouring Orange river. As he spoke there entered O'Reilly, an ostrich-hunter. They tried one of the stones on the window glass and scratched it all over, the scratches remaining there till this day. It was agreed if it turned out a diamond all were to share equally. On his way to Cape Town O'Reilly showed the stone, and was laughed at for his credulity; it was even taken from him, and recovered with difficulty from the street where it had been thrown; but 'he laughs best who laughs last,' for in Cape Town the pebble from the banks of the Orange was pronounced a diamond, and bought by Sir Philip Wodehouse for 500*l*. Ten more such were easily found by the *vrouw* Jacobs, and early in the next year, 1868, several were picked up along the banks of the Vaal; among them the renowned Star of South Africa, by a Hottentot shepherd, who sold it to Niekirk the trader for 400*l*., who disposed of it on the same day for 12,000*l*. Then the *rush* began in earnest, first to Pniel and the river diggings on the Vaal—Pniel, which stretched with its sea of tents, its hive of men and chequer of claims, down to the loud and busy river, and up again to the populous heights of Klipdrift. Here and there, but rarely upon the slope, a canteen of dirty canvas, or a plank-built store with roof of corrugated iron; upon the slope, all pocked with holes, so that all looked like some rude and careless cemetery. Within three months of the first discovery there were five thousand digging there.

So much briefly for the river diggings, soon abandoned to poor diggers without capital, and now all but deserted for the dry

diggings, first heard of in December 1870. The yield in the two years' work along the river-banks had not been greater than about 300,000*l.*; while at Kimberley it was not long before a miner found, in fifteen days, 10,000*l.* worth. The story of the first dry diggings at Dorstfontein, now known as Dutoitspan, closely resembles that at the home of the *vrouw* Jacobs, only that this time there was no river within twenty miles. The news that the children of the Boer Dutoit, like the children in Utopia, were in the habit of picking up and playing with diamonds soon spread, and within a month the farm was *rushed*. Rip van Winkle woke from his century sleep to find an endless train of carts and waggons filing past his windows, an excitable, surging crowd marking out his garden into claims, and his cow-boys and calves scampering over the veldt with the lizards and partridges and rabbits. So Dutoit sells his farm for 5,000*l.*, and *treks* northward to slumber again; while quick, as in a pantomime, there rises the white sheen of tents along the ridge, and the pale grey mounds of sorted stuff. Through the avenue of aloes, past the scanty acacias and the tufted grasses, across the eternal plains *treks* Rip van Winkle away to gorge himself elsewhere on lumps of mutton and the tasteless *fricadel*, to doze retired in some small village with its hedges of pomegranate and willow, to wake up monthly for the *Nachtmaal*, the sacrament of all good followers of Zwingleius. *Semper aliquid novi affert Africa*. Then does fever seize the Cape Colony and shake its bones.

The bank-clerk kicks over his stool and splits his pens, and tramps it out to New Rush. He travels all night, happy if he keeps the track across the long wastes peopled with the springbok and the Kafir cranes; he sleeps when the flies and fleas will let him, sometimes in a mud-walled *outspan*, sometimes in a farm-inn-post-office, with half a dozen fly-blown letters stuck in cracks of the wooden walls; sometimes in a mission station, buried in huge trees and murmurous with dykes of running water. In such an oasis of lemons and figs, and sugar-canes and quinces, of neat walls and hedges, fencing the church and parsonage, among such odours and pleasant glow of flowers, a man might surely rest himself and recover from his bloodheat; but no! the bank-clerk is afire and will not, cannot rest; and so, passing sometimes one of the many unknown dead, and sometimes a tramping sailor, half-lunatic with thirst, he comes at last upon the bones and horns and rotting bodies of mule and horse that tell him he is

near the waters that will slake his thirst, and either kill or cure him. He is 750 miles by now from Cape Town, on a spot that a year ago was a lonely African farm, where the long thin wreath of scarlet, green, and yellow locusts used to swoop, the secretary-birds tower among the scanty herbage, the bustards flap and peck, and the bright and active little meercats hide. And now within a circuit of three miles there are 60,000 men under tents, the richest of them washing in soda-water, and paying half a guinea for a cauliflower, the poorest tasting never a vegetable and taking never a bath. If we follow the fortunes of the bank-clerk, we find him setting to work at once on a share in half a claim (a claim, thirty feet square). He works till fever and bad food and exposure reduce him to a shadow; he works till he can no longer stand, and then they carry him back to Cape Town, and, opening his bedroom window for the sea-breeze to get at him, leave him to do the best he can for himself. Meanwhile at New Rush, if *he* has no luck, there are fortunate diggers in plenty, and twenty per cent. of them at least paying their way. There are gentlemen, who were last heard of in the Foreign Legion in Paris, with their tobacco-jars now full of diamonds; there are magnificoes from Piccadilly, last viewed in grey frockcoats, and now in ancient corduroy trousers, untanned leather veldt boots, a flannel shirt cut off at the elbows, and a billycock hat with an ostrich feather, their diamonds stuffed in the fingers of their old white gloves; there are three young gentlemen of quality set up in a chop-house; and there is your typical adventurer, who finds a stone of 50*l.*, goes off to Klipdrift and spends it for three days, spends twenty pounds of it, and loses the balance coming home drunk. They and thousands of others are all at New Rush, and compared with the old gold-miners of California are order itself; they drink champagne in the morning, it is true, and they take a nightly turn at faro and roulette in the gilded gambling-saloons, with the best of drink and the best of sandwiches to be had for nothing; but there is no revolver and no knife, and soon the piano raises its musical tinkle, and, on the hottest of the hot nights, doors are even left open for such air as there is to enter. The bank-clerk, after a year's absence, returns with more capital and more energy, and as he drives into the town, for New Rush now begins to be a town, follows in the reverential train of a funeral, and marks how they bury the dead at New Rush in the year 1872. First, two gentlemen in black, parsons he supposes,

one of them in a green wideawake; next a creaking mule-cart, with a coffin built of packing-cases, covered with a railway rug, and underneath a *kaross* of jackal-skins, fallen off in the jolting, and trailing behind; the whole driven by a negro, stockwhip in hand, upright and swearing. Behind, the dead man's friends, fifty-two of them—a complete pack!—only one in a black coat, borrowed from a larger friend, the others all with rolled-up sleeves, broad belts, and corduroys, but hearty and sincere in their mourning all, except two small diamond-buyers, who walk along, smiling, whispering, and nudging. With varying fortune toils the bank-clerk for another year, in a bad claim, and against him, his want of experience; until, like the gambler changing his seat, he changes his claim, and with it his luck. In six years from the change of luck he goes home with—what shall we say?—ten thousand pounds in gold, and the largest diamond the fields have ever yet produced. Ten years almost of the diamond-fields, among some of the strangest company the world can show, should surely produce something in the way of adventure, especially when of those ten six are to be counted as of the most brilliant success. Surely he was shot at, stabbed at, at the least laid wait for by some desperado with huge brown arms, tattooed and lime-scarred? Not at all! He did his work, he drank no champagne in the mornings, he frequented no gambling-saloon, but in bed soon after sundown, the laughter, the shouting, and the music, the Kafir cry, and the tipsy songs only lulled him to a slumber more profound, and the flicker of lights between tent and tent showed his, dark and restful. And up at dawn was he at work again, the African dawn, wherein no birds sing, no insects move; when in an instant the flaming disk leaps clear above the low white mounds of gravel and throws his giant shadow blue on the dusty ground. Once, it is true, when he had risen to the dignity of a house, some 'off-coloured fellows' entered it during his absence at dinner, and carried off a packet of tree seeds, under the impression they were diamonds; but even in these days of detail that can scarcely be called an adventure, unless, perhaps, for the 'off-coloured fellows,' camp cart-drivers.

One of the great and irritating difficulties which the digger has to make the best of is the illicit diamond-buyer, the mine fence or receiver of stolen gems. The Kafirs steal the stones at the claims or the sorting tables, sell them for ridiculously low prices to one of the many illicit buyers, who is off at once to

another mine, and there disposes of them to enormous advantage. One of the largest of South African diamonds, the Jagersfontein (of 200 $\frac{1}{4}$ carats), passed through an adventure of this sort, which, for the light it throws on life and manners at the mines, is worth the telling.¹ To begin with, the Kafir-boy stole it directly he found it, and then, with it hidden in his hair, or his ear, or his teeth, or his waistcloth, went about trying to sell it—first to Mr. P. H. Rivers, who keeps a shop at Jagersfontein. ‘I remember a Kafir coming to me,’ says Mr. Rivers, ‘one night between nine and ten. The Kafir asked me the price of a blanket. I showed him one. He said he would come some other day and buy it. I looked at him; he made sign and said, “Baas, I want to see you.” He went out of my shop, and I followed. He said he had something, but was afraid of me. I asked him how it was he was afraid of me? “Why, because,” he replied, “I have been to the other shop,” pointing to Adamson’s, “and it is closed.” I told him to show me what he had got. He said it was a large diamond, and showed me the bowl of his pipe, and said it was as large as that. I told him to take it out and show it to me. He said, “No, I’m afraid.” Afterwards he said he would go and fetch the diamond, which was hidden under a stone. I was not to go to sleep; he would be back presently. As he passed Adamson’s door it opened, and a Kafir came out, by the name of Woolwash, I think. The two talked a short time, and then went into Adamson’s shop. The other side door of the shop opened shortly afterwards. I saw the same boy that had been with me come out. I knew him by his white trousers which had stripes on them. Two other Kafirs also came out. The first passed the dwelling-house of Adamson. I saw men going to Adamson’s house. The dwelling-house is about five yards from the shop. A little time afterwards, the Kafir who had the stone returned to Adamson’s shop. He went in at the back door. My boy (a bushman) was with me. I told him he might go to bed. Next morning I asked my boy if he had seen the Kafir who had the big diamond? He said he had seen him in Adamson’s place, and saw him go to the tent where Adamson’s Kafirs stayed. I sent my boy to the tent to tell the Kafir I wanted to see him. My boy came back and told me the Kafir would not come. I

¹ The account of the theft and capture of the Jagersfontein is taken from Mr. Streeter’s interesting work, ‘The Great Diamonds of the World, their History and Romance.’

stood on my *stoop* and watched, and saw the boy going to Adamson's shop. I called out to him, "How is it with the big diamond you didn't bring?" He said, "It's too late, the *baas* has the diamond," pointing to Adamson's shop. I asked him if he had sold it? He replied, "Yes." I asked how much he got for it? He answered, "It was not yet all settled." (Sensation in court when it was proved Adamson only gave 15*l.* for the stone for which he expected 5,000*l.* at Kimberley.) Then Adamson and his accomplice, Kleb, try and get away with their booty, while in the meantime, Mr. Frames, whose claim had been robbed, prepares to start out after them. Mr. G. S. Armstrong, manager of a mining company, is responsible for the recapture. "I voluntarily assisted," he says, "to capture the accused thieves, Jacob Kleb and Frederick Adamson. A plan was made to allow them to go to a certain distance and then apprehend them. The accused took the Koffyfontein road to Kimberley. We had made a circuit, and were returning, when we met the accused about three miles this side of Swanepoel's. The distance from here to Swanepoel's is about four hours on horseback, or twenty-four miles. My comrade, Dykes, and myself pretended to be drunk. Kleb asked how far it was to the house? Dykes tried to answer in Dutch, saying "*a klein beetje farder.*" Dykes's horse was almost knocked up. Mine, being better, I crossed country to head the cart which Kleb and Adamson were driving, Dykes following the cart. It was about half-past nine when we came to Swanepoel's. We found the cart outspanned, and sent in one of the other party, which had now joined us, to see if the accused were there. He gave us the signal that they were. We went up to the door, six of us, and went in. The two accused were sitting at a table having a sing-song, a darkey lady sitting on the right. There was also a travelling Jew. On going in we covered them with our revolvers. Mr. Dykes (who could not read Dutch) told them we had a warrant for their apprehension. Kleb asked for what? Mr. Frames then read the warrant in Dutch. We next handcuffed the accused. We took Kleb into another room, and searched him, a few being left to guard the prisoners. We found no diamonds on him. We then searched Adamson, but found no diamonds on him. We brought the woman into the room and asked Mrs. Swanepoel to search her. Mrs. Swanepoel said she was afraid, so we had to do it ourselves. We found no diamonds on the woman. We took the others out of the room into the

room where Kleb was. We searched the carpet-bag. Kleb's was the first we searched. We found no diamonds. I saw a side-bag lying on a bed in another room, and asked the woman if it was hers? The bag is the same as is now before the Court. The woman said the bag did not belong to her nor to Adamson. I picked it up, and took it to the room where Kleb was. I asked Kleb if the bag belonged to him. He said, "Yes." I opened it and pulled out a silk handkerchief, and then a pair of trousers. The trousers produced by the Court are the same. I asked Kleb if the trousers were his? He said, "Yes." I put the trousers on the table. Mr. Wilson was by my side. He commenced searching. I was going to the other room when Wilson shouted. I do not know what he said, but, knowing there was something up, rushed back. Wilson was excited. I don't know what he said. I was also excited. He had a diamond in his hand. I am not certain from whom I got it, but I got hold of it. Mr. Wilson said he found it in one of the pockets of the trousers. We searched the cart, after which we took the prisoners, and brought them back to Jagersfontein, and handed them over to the police.' On the committal of the prisoners, they confessed to having sold, within the last two months, diamonds of 65, 10, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ carats for 1,200*l.*; and two of $19\frac{1}{2}$ carats each, and one of $21\frac{1}{2}$ carats for 375*l.* at Kimberley.

It will be useful here to give the commonly accepted derivation of the word *carat*. In the country of the Shangallas, in South Africa, where there has ever been a great commerce in gold, from time immemorial the natives have been accustomed to use as weights the seeds of the *Erythrina corallodendron*, from their almost precise similarity and equal weight when dried. The native word for the seed appears to have been *karat*. From Africa it passed to India, and from a gold weight became used for precious stones, and, divided into four grains, was early common to all the countries trafficking with India. There are certain sensible differences between the carat of different countries—between the carat, for instance, of a jeweller at Florence and a jeweller at Madras. That is only to be expected, considering the rather chance nature of the weight; but what seems strange is the fact that down to 1877 there was a variation even among the first Paris houses until in that year 'La Chambre Syndicale des négociants en diamants' decided that henceforth the carat should correspond exactly to 205 milligrammes. Note, pray, that

above one carat the value of the diamond increases as the square of the weight; that is to say, a stone double the weight of another has four times the value; treble the weight, nine times the value; ten times the weight, a hundred times the value. The best are worth 12*l.* per carat.

The bank-clerk who knew New Rush in 1873 would scarcely recognise in it the Kimberley of 1886, now the most intelligent spot in South Africa, with its many churches and theatres, its racecourse and clubs, its broad streets and throng of private carriages, and, in strange contrast, the oxen carts on the marketplace with provisions from the country round; even its 'Advertiser,' that might be the 'Advertiser' of some provincial English town, down to the scene at the borough council about the estimates of last year and the mysterious disappearance of a councillor. The east end is the fashionable part, where you live at the club for 20*l.* a month without wine; at the west end live the blacks, the Zulus, Griquas, Hottentots, 4,000 of them or so, who have all to be in at sundown. They fight terribly among themselves, yet, with all their savagery, five or six policemen are enough to keep them in order. Of the mine itself, perhaps we can give the best idea in saying it is about the size of Leicester Square—Leicester Square dug very deep, and crossed and recrossed with innumerable ropes, as though those at the bottom were playing at cat's cradle with those at the top. Of the four mines the following is the production for 1885:—

Name of Mine	Carats	Valuation			Average per carat	
		£	s.	d.	s.	d.
Kimberley . . .	523,774½	458,858	4	3	17	6½
De Beer's . . .	566,233½	500,134	10	11	17	8
Dutoitspan . . .	560,912½	690,360	19	9	24	7½
Bultfontein . . .	636,340½	579,326	1	9	18	2½
	2,287,261	2,228,679	16	8	19	5½

What more to say about the Cape and its diamonds, when so much remains to be said, is not easy to decide; for the literary artist, like other commoner folk, finds himself again and again between the well-polished horns of the ancient dilemma, the horn of duty to the place or subject he writes of, and the horn he owes the reader, not to neglect or lightly dismiss the one, and not to fatigue the other; and which horn to exalt, even at the risk of seeming to blow his own, puzzles him often prodigiously. For, consider, we have written nothing as yet of the *Pan* itself, that circular depression in the veldt, with earthy bottom and

sides, possibly an ancient mud-spring, where the diamonds may have been carried either by wind or the ostriches; nor of the garnets, agates, chalcedony, arrow-heads, stone-chippings, and ostrich egg-shells in fragments, found in company with the diamond; nor how they are picked out on a ridge, and often found fast imbedded in the mud-walls of the farmhouses; nor of the superior crystallisation of the Cape stones, unlike those water-worn of the Brazils, and their liability to split mysteriously in the night; nor of the enormous yield of gems, how that in five years the Cape has produced more than in a hundred and fifty years of the Brazils, and more in a week than in a year of the Indies; nor of the gradual extinction of the old digger, how that he is slowly giving way to the company, and passing away sadly, with his inflamed eyes and scarred arms, to the deserted river-diggings, where the unsuccessful elsewhere there may earn a scanty and a melancholy livelihood. But to write all one knows is to be exceedingly tiresome. '*Woe to the man who tells all that he knows!*' is the warning of a great artist. Come, then, let us pass away from the Cape, like the storm-clouds from the summit of its mighty Table Mountain; let us draw the cloth, as the sailors say, and vanish.

Where the diamond comes from nobody knows. You can no more predict the existence of diamonds than you can the existence of genius, though, to be sure, all diamond-fields to a certain extent resemble each other; and all, borrowing as they do their light from the sun, are found only in warm climates. Nor can you tell where the diamond goes to on combustion. Burn it, and it leaves no ash; the flame is exterior, like that of cork, and when it has blazed itself out there remains not even so much as would dust the *antenna* of a butterfly. If man has his mysteries, his strange conversions, his going in a sinner, his coming out a saint; so, too, has Nature. The philosopher's stone is formed of the vilest materials, and the chimney-sweep is covered with that which, under happier auspices, would be jewels. This mysterious process of crystallisation places between two bodies of the same nature a greater difference than between bodies differently composed. And yet not so great a mystery either, for every year a process is discovered for making diamonds—only somehow the diamonds are never made, or, at the best, so microscopic and at such an enormous expense that they are absolutely useless, except to gum on cards at the British Museum. In France they say a solution

of phosphorus in sulphuret of carbon yields minute diamonds, but that these things are better managed there than here has been long allowed.

The ancients were as sure no diamonds could be burnt as they were that none could be broken. 'Αδάμας, the indomptable, yielded neither to fire nor force. It was not till 1609 that De Boot suspected its inflammability, nor till 1673 that it was actually burnt. In 1694, Averani and Targioni of Cimento, at the instigation of Cosmo III., the Grand Duke of Florence, burnt the diamond in the focus of concentrated sun-rays, where it was seen to crack, coruscate, and finally disappear. They had tried to learn the secret of its composition, and, like a true martyr, it had perished, unconfessed; it had burnt itself out like a sun. Forty-four years after the death of Newton (who guessed the diamond to be some 'unctuous body coagulated'; perhaps the vegetable secretion of the Banian tree, better to shake than the Pagoda), a magnificent diamond was burnt, on July 26, 1771, in the laboratory of M. Macquer, and in the presence, among others, of a well-known Parisian jeweller, M. Le Blanc; who, notwithstanding what he had just seen, stood forward and declared the diamond to be indestructible in the furnace, for that he had often subjected stones of his own to intense heat to rid them of blemishes, and that they had never suffered the slightest injury in the process. Thereupon the two chemists, D'Arcet and Rouelle, demanded the experiment should be made before them on the spot. *Rapit in jus; clamor utrinque, undique concursus*; with the result that poor Le Blanc, like the *savant de village*, found himself, after three hours' trial in the crucible, at the temperature that melts silver, minus one of the most precious of his stock in trade.

No! if you doubt your diamond, do not either try to burn it or to break it. You may test it with black mastic, to which, if it be real, it will adhere closely. You may even, if your ears be sharp, rub two together, and mark the indescribable grating, creaking sound—*le bruit strident*—they give out; so do the officers of the Junta Diamantina in the Brazils with their doubtful stones; and, lastly, you may try its refractive power, for, unlike all other crystals, the diamond has no double refraction, that is to say, objects looked at through the diamond remain objects still, and are not doubled. There is an affecting anecdote told of an Englishman travelling all the way to Paris to consult a cele-

brated chemist there on the value of a splendid diamond in his possession, which, being the last of his store, he was anxious to dispose of *summo pretio*. At a glance the chemist recognised in the splendid diamond a white topaz merely—a very good sort of stone in its way, but no diamond. ‘Observe!’ said he, in illustration, ‘behind the stone, if it be a diamond, you will see one pin only, for the refraction of the diamond is single; but behind it, if it be a crystal, the pin will be doubled.’ He had to fix the stone in wax, and the pin in wax behind it, so much the poor gentleman’s hand shook. When lo! clearly behind it the pins were two [which, generally selected as they are of a type of worthlessness, in this instance represented a very considerable sum], the historian relates that, ‘après être resté assis quelque temps dans un état d’insensibilité malade, l’Anglais prit congé tout à coup de l’Académicien.’

There is yet one experiment further that may be made to test the diamond’s truth, that has not been made, we imagine, for a good many years past, and yet, perhaps, might be made by the amateur when otherwise he would be wasting his time over reading and writing, or merely putting his collection in order. First, you get your goat—not your common stable goat, nor yet your regimental goat, nor even your goat that bleats round the residence of a minister, but a goat that must often have heard the chimes at midnight, that must occasionally have been drunken with new wine and fed up heartily on the *Siler montanum* and *Petroselinum*, the only herbs that will give his blood the desired astonishing properties. And then you kill him. You take his blood, fresh and warm, and you dip one of his hairs in it, and you lay it across the doubtful stone, and you strike it, as the old Cambridge coach desired his crew to strike the water, ‘as if you hated it.’ And then, says Pliny, with a burst of confidence Mr. Micawber might have envied, it, after all, often happens that with many blows you only manage to break the anvil! And if you break the stone, well it may or may not be a diamond; but, at any rate, of this you may be sure, that it was the only method known to the ancients by which diamonds *could* be broken. And it was this that Sir Thomas Browné, knight and physician of Norwich, chose to treat as a Popular Error, and gravely to dispose of in his inimitable work on the subject, where at the same time, among other fallacies, he shows the cruelty and injustice of the common belief that *Jews have a bad odour*.

We have written that it was not for many centuries, not till the fifteenth, that the diamond was cut, when, in 1456, Louis de Berquem, of Bruges, discovered the secret of cutting and polishing the stone by its own aid: *diamond cut diamond*. Ten years later a guild was established, and in 1476 Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, sent him three fine stones—one for Sixtus IV., one for Louis XI., and one for himself, which was taken off his dead finger by a soldier and sold to a priest after the battle before Nancy in 1477. Louis's grandson, Robert, says he received 3,000 ducats for his work, and describes how his pupils, after learning from him all he had to teach, went and set up for themselves in Antwerp, in Amsterdam, and in Paris. Then the Dutchmen carried the art to India; travellers speak of them there and in Persia, and at Ispahan Tavernier came upon one established. In Lisbon gems were cut by the Jews, who, on their expulsion at the end of the sixteenth century, went to Holland, settling there within a year to the number of 10,000, connected in one way or the other with diamonds. In Paris, by Mazarin's influence, twelve of the most famous of the French crown jewels were recut, of which only the stone known as the Tenth Mazarin, of sixteen carats, and valued at 2,000*l.*, now remains; and by the minister's encouragement there were at the end of the seventeenth century seventy-five cutters at work, in 1775 dwindled unhappily down to seven only. In Amsterdam, so thinned were they by civil war, dissension, and invasion, that there were but six. There were no old diamonds to be recut, there were 3,832 carats of new waiting to be attacked, but the seven masters of Paris were either old and stupid, or could not work fast enough, for the stones were sent to Antwerp, and at the Revolution the cutters were at work on them and on old stones from the crown of France in an abandoned convent of the Chartreux.

During the Revolution there was a great glut of diamonds, owing to the large sales of family jewels; diamonds have never been so low as in '93 and in '25, the year of the discovery in the Brazils; so low that at the time William of Nassau revived the industry there were only twenty lapidaries who knew anything about it. After 1830, the year of the independence of Belgium, by the wise administration of Leopold, it was not long before there were at Antwerp fifteen factories, employing 800 workmen and apprentices. At Amsterdam, now the first city in Europe for the sale and cutting of stones, there are 10,000.

London, a hundred and fifty years ago, was the chief centre of the diamond-cutting trade; but the art was neglected until some ten years back, when the great influx of Cape diamonds led to its revival. The workmen were at first Dutch, but they were gradually displaced by Englishmen; and at present a diamond, particularly if it be a coloured stone, may be cut in London almost as skilfully as at Amsterdam. Of coloured stones—*pierres d'affection* as the French call them—it is enough to say that they are of all shades, from diamonds red as an African sunset to those blue as a child's eyes, and black 'as ash-buds in March.' Yellow, of course, are common enough, especially from the Cape, where they run from light amber to the dark brown of a Highland stream in spate. The blue are from the Indian mines of Gani-Colour; there are none in Brazil or at the Cape; while the black and red are mostly from the Cape. It is said that in the treasury of the Brazils there are diamonds parti-coloured.

'*I'll sing you a song of a diamond so fine!*' rasps a Georgian ballad-monger, and, truly, not only might he sing many a song, but tell many a tale of bloodshed and rapine, of intrigue and revenge, of furious greed, of merciless and revolting assassination. It is an Arabian belief that the diamond makes happy all whose hands it touches; but with this bright gift there is ever to be associated that more common power of inflicting sorrow and disaster. '*Plus que l'être est parfait,*' sings Dante, '*plus il sent vivement la douleur et la joie!*' And if the diamond can feel and can communicate its joy, so, too, it spreads the contagion of its grief. It is the veritable *aurum Tholosanum* of the Romans, that ill-omened temple treasure, of which Aulus Gellius writes, sacrilegiously seized at Toulouse in Languedoc, and, with its dumb and fateful power of retribution, bringing ruin only on the possessors. Torn from nature's reliquary, the diamond laughs in the ravisher's turban, or sparkles in the hilt of his sword but one moment before he is strangled in the long silk folds, or in the back 'is fetched three sword-cuts of which he incontinently dies.'

Take the diamond, as the old sorcerer took the magic crystal, and gaze into the limpid depths; what will you see there? peace and content, the happiness of all those whose hands it has touched, the joy and pleasure of a perfect possession? Nay, rather bloody crook'd fingers and staring eyes, malignant crouching figures and poisoned daggers, the black and haunted galleries of cave-temples, the tawdry glitter of Eastern cupolas and towers,

the pestiferous swamps of the Brazils, the threatening gloom of prisons, the horrible ingenuity of torture. See, on this close night of tempest, in the guise of temple watcher, who is this that skulks round the great idol of Seringham? who is this that in the blaze of lightning wrenches the jewel from the eye of the great god Sri-Ranga, and is off into the storm, tramping through the sheets and spouts of rain down to the coast, through the hostile English force, to take ship and flee home with his treasure? *Beau grenadier! beau grenadier!* plain, dishonest, Jaques Badinguet, masquerading with patient cunning as the devout Jamchund, guardian of the inner shrine, what didst thou dream of on that lurid night-splash of thine? of a Normandy farmhouse and Normandy cider, of the skirl of the *binion* and the whirl of the *ronde*, of the growth of thy buckwheat and the sale of thy calves, of the swelling of thy possessions, of the fine dresses of thy wife, thy son one day to be a priest, thy daughter one day to marry the doctor of Ouchy-sur-Seine?

Unhappy, unforeseeing Jaques! thou hast never heard of the terrible *aurum Tholosanum*, nor imagined the far-reaching arm of the angry god Sri-Ranga! Splash, tramp thy best, hide as thou wilt by day, hurrying only through the night, avoiding the villages and the temple compounds, clutch thy jewel close to thee, play what most of cunning and precaution in thee lies; still there awaits thee that inflamed and brandy-soak'd English sea-captain, who will take thee by the heels and hurl thee full fathom five, whereof thy bones are coral made, and of pearl thine eyes. And for thy diamond—see! it goes flashing, leaving behind a comet trail of blood, to nestle afar in the sceptre of all the Russias, whence to distant Seringham it sends out rays of yearning to where the great god sits with his long, slow, inscrutable smile, and, alas! henceforth, but one eye. *Pauvre Jaques*, is it any consolation to thee that in thy misfortunes and death thou art not alone? Thou liest at the bottom of the Arabian sea, and hast long suffered a sea-change into something rich and strange. And, lo! in the forest of Dôle, in thy native land, under the scarlet beech-leaves, lies another full as unfortunate, within whose withered bowels, for a whole winter, was the great gem that now trembles *à jour* on a Rajah's plume. *On m'arrachera plutôt la vie que le diamant!* cried the faithful valet, hurrying with it to the succour of a king. They came down upon him in a forest glade with an *Arrêtez, coquin!* and he, with an agonised glance this way and that, seeing no escape, gulped

the jewel down, and cut and thrust as best he knew in his valet fashion, and so lay under the beech-leaves, gashed and cold. And in the spring, Nature's gardener, the wind, bared him, fallen away and dried, and there his master came upon him, and safe within—strange human setting, more precious in its purity than gold!—the Great Sancy, rightly named the Sphinx of Diamonds. Unfortunate Jaques, *beau grenadier*! faithful, unflinching valet! truly thou art not alone, nor in the worst of company in thy woes. The Great Mogul is with thee both—in prison he—his only consolation in confinement such basins of jewels as are left him, such trays of diamonds, lacquered with gold-leaf and covered with embroidered velvet cloths. His monstrous son, the usurper Aurungzeb, with odious effrontery, tries to borrow these treasures for his unnatural coronation. 'Then did Shah Jehan fall into a paroxysm of rage, which nearly killed him. In the excess of his anger he asked several times for a mortar and a pestle, saying that he wanted to pound all his gems and pearls, so that Aurungzeb might never have any of them. But his eldest daughter, Begum Saheb, who never forsook him, throwing herself at his feet, prevented him from coming to this extremity, and . . . appeased Shah Jehan, more in order to preserve the jewels for herself than to please her brother.'

The Great Mogul dies in his Agra prison, yet one more victim of the creeping malignity of the *aurum Tholosanum*, the possessor still of the great stone, known later as the Koh-i-nûr, and his treasures pass to Aurungzeb, to remain with the Mogul dynasty until Nadir Shah, the son of the sheepskin clothier, swoops down on India in 1739. Then does the Persian adventurer send many, both good and brave, to swell the company below, who crowd with their pale eyes round the latest to learn the news of the upper world. *My great diamond!* cries the Shah Jehan, wringing his transparent brown hands; *who has now my great diamond?* They hear the furious Persian is at blood-heat search after the great stone, stabbing and poisoning, reaching it only at last through a woman's treachery. A long chill sigh floats from the crowd of listening spectres, blood-washed all, as the harem attendant whispers Nadir the jewel is in Mohammed's turban, hidden away; and another, louder and more long, as at the great Delhi ceremony to reinstate Mohammed on the throne of his Tartar ancestors, 'Let us,' cries Nadir, 'in your country's fashion exchange our turbans in final token of amity!'

Mohammed Shah gives no sign of chagrin or surprise. The exchange is made; he takes the Persian's sheepskin headdress, and Nadir, withdrawing to his tent, trembling unfolds the turban, and *Koh-i-nûr!* he yells, at the sight of the long-sought stone—*Koh-i-nûr*, mountain of light! A sad company then in the lower world; and sadder still now, maimed and tortured, most with a shadow of black bands over their empty eye-sockets. So much does the *aurum Tholosanum* for them! afflict them as with a leprosy, contract their muscles, lop off their limbs, rob them of sight, even scald their wretched bare skulls with boiling oil poured into a diadem of paste. And all this to be seen in the limpid depths of the diamond! A lovely stone, perchance, like that one lately shown, 'which attracted attention by revealing under the microscope a prospect of pointed mountain-crests, lit up by a vivid sunlight in all the colours of the rainbow.' Rainbow, emblem of hope! What hope for any of that Dantesque company, holding up their lopped limbs, as the poor conscripts round the mighty Emperor, with his arms folded, and the flames of hell licking and leaping round him? What hope for them, or for the rebel Sadek Khan, bricked up alive long since in a dungeon for retaining the Great Shah table-cut stone engraved with the name of three Persian rulers? bricked up alive, because his blood had been sworn by his enemy never to be shed. Hope has long flown from them all; and hopeless they wander, *ululantes*, among the echoing Avernian shades.

Asleep and naked as an Indian lay,
 An honest factor stole a gem away :
 He pledged it to the knight, the knight had wit,
 So kept the di'mond and the rogue was bit.

There you have the whole diamond history, in diamond edition and diamond type. The Indian steals it, cuts a hole in his leg, and hides the gem in the wound and the bandage; the merchant of the native quarter steals it while the original thief is asleep in the mimosa shade, throws him into the Tigris when he wakes and would set off howling for the *cadi*; the knight, governor of Fort what-you-will, steals it, or as good, for he uses all his power to force the merchant to take the lowest number of pagodas, and hurries him off out of the town when his cries grow loud; then they poison him, the knight, on board ship, on his way home to buy an estate in Hampshire, and hang him in effigy on shore, and his faithful body-servant robs the dead and

breaks up the stone to prevent identification, and the fragments fly here and there, and all begins again *da capo*. Poor old Tavernier himself, worthy travelling jeweller, and highly successful dealer in precious stones, retires to a great estate to spend in peace his last years with his loved and trusted son. The *Grand Monarque* has added the honour of nobility to all the money his honest toil has brought him; surely the sunset of his life will be splendid and calm, a gorgeous pavilion of happy memories, across whose hues flit only the swallow messengers from another world, crying and calling him already home! But the son is a hopeless scamp, and the West grows clouded, a cloud no bigger than a man's—a young man's hand. No need to tell the common melancholy story; the estate is sold to pay the young vagabond's debts, and once more to the East, yet once more, goes poor old Tavernier, to trade at eighty-four in his poor old shaky fashion, to be pricked ere well on his road by the merciful fever-spear of death, and to die, as the Emir Jemla died, cheated of his jewels and his rest by the child of his bosom. *Aurum Tholosanum! aurum Tholosanum!*

In conclusion, for those interested we may add that in the imperial state crown of Britain there are 1,363 brilliant, 1,273 rose, and 147 table diamonds. The brilliant was the crowning invention of the art, the work of Vincenzo Peruzzi of Venice, in the century in which Mazarin had the crown jewels of France recut; the rose dates from 1520, it is the form chosen when the loss to the stone would be too great if the brilliant cut were selected, and is used chiefly for circular gems; the table is the method employed for shallow diamonds, and is the original cut. When Blood on May 9, 1671, made his attempt on the crown, the historian relates, 'a large pearl, a fair diamond, and a number of smaller stones were bulged from the crown in this robustious struggle, but both the former, and several of the latter, were picked up and recovered. The *Ballais* ruby, which had been broken off the sceptre, was found in his accomplice's (Parrot) pocket.'



HOW I ROSE FROM CROW-BOY.

PART II.

Two pounds eighteen shillings is not in itself a big fortune, but it may often be worth 5,000*l.* of inherited money, for when once a man has commenced saving he is likely, barring accidents, to go on. I found my new master a capital fellow, with only one fault, and that was that he had a superabundance of energy himself, and too great love and capacity for work, since these led him to expect, in vain, that others would have the same. There is moderation in everything. I had no idea until I had been a few days with the gentlemanly dealer what manner of man he was. He was such a remarkable character that I cannot resist trying to give a sketch of him, though I am well aware that it will be a feeble one. Indeed he would have taxed the pen of a Smiles to adequately draw. He was a little, wiry, fresh-coloured man of about forty, with a gentlemanly address, an insinuating smile, which was not without due effect on all who came across him, from gentleman-farmers to butchers. He was certainly one of the best and quickest judges of cattle that ever went into a market. By seeing him so frequently about our neighbourhood, and knowing that he had a large farm a few miles away, we had got to fancy that he was merely a local dealer, and a peculiar attribute of our neighbourhood. I dare say so also thought the farmers of many other districts. But the fact was very different. He lived at W—— in the Black Country, finding it a convenient centre from which to travel all over England. On Monday he attended L——, a northern port 150 miles from home. To reach this place in time for market he would have to spend Sunday night in the train. Travelling back after market, he would reach home late on Monday night. On Tuesday he would attend a large weekly market near home. On Wednesday he would be seen at the market at W——, where he nominally lived. Thursday at B——, about fifteen miles off. I forget his Friday's task, but the day was certainly not unoccupied. On Saturdays he would (except on days when there was a monthly or fortnightly cattle fair which he wished to go to, and which might be in any county) devote himself

to looking over his farms, of which he had two or three large ones always crowded with cattle, or driving about amongst his numerous customers. When the season permitted—that is, always except in winter—he would, at the conclusion of each market, ransack the neighbourhood he happened to be in. He had a rather ingenious scheme for getting from one place to another, which I will describe later on. How he found time and energy to visit all these markets, in addition to calling on his legion of customers, is a mystery even to those who knew him best. But he managed it somehow. He had, of course, to pay the penalty of his success and popularity. If he had wished ever so much to do less business, he would have been forced to continue in the old groove or give up altogether, as his customers would send their beasts to no one else. At night, when other dealers were enjoying their glass—glasses—in the bar of the ‘Red Lion’ or ‘Spotted Pig,’ he, after a frugal meal, would be engaged with his clerk in carefully going through the accounts of the day (he was a good accountant and correspondent), which were always posted to his customers in the morning. Bank Holidays were his great delight; no child could have enjoyed what he was pleased to call a holiday more. Contrary to most people’s ideas, he would have liked a few more of them, and he probably thought (though his interest in politics was limited) that Sir John Lubbock was the most practical and business-like of statesmen. He would start from home at daybreak, driving twenty miles or so into the country with his big brown horse (which was almost as well known as his master) to a farm where he had previously arranged to look at some beasts. From there he would get the farmer to drive him to another place, whence he would be forwarded to another—in good times selling, perhaps, at one farm the stock bought at the last. He was such a valuable man to the country that the farmers would have done anything for him; but it was not every one he would visit. Towards night he would have worked round to the farm at which he had left his horse in the morning. Then came the twenty-mile drive home, where he would arrive some time in the small hours, having thoroughly enjoyed his holiday. Perhaps his plan was as healthy a way of spending his time as that of many others. Oddly enough, though he did a large business, often amounting to thousands a week, with a London agent, he had never himself been to London. It was said that he once started, and got as far as Rugby, when he returned—

I forget why. I am sorry indeed to say that the enormous amount of work he did found him out at last, and he died a comparatively young man from a slight illness which he had left himself no surplus power to resist. No man could possibly have been more missed, for he left a space which it took quite half a dozen of the ordinary run to fill, and even then they did not fill it in the same style. He was not above the arts of a dealer, or he would not have been a dealer long—I mean the arts of depreciating what you want to buy and cracking up what you want to sell. But he was a thoroughly honest man, and it would have been hard to find one in any walk of life more respected. Times have altered since then, and it is not risking much to prophesy that his like will not soon appear again. A feeling of insecurity has been aroused by the revolutionary nonsense talked and written by men who want notoriety at any rate. Land is going out of cultivation. Stock is nominally worth very little. In reality there are no purchasers. Notwithstanding the vast number of cows that will soon be wanted to stock the 'three-acre' farms, dealers and their stock are a drug in the market.

A class of men rushed into farming about twenty years ago who were very profitable customers to my master. I mean the 'apron-farmer.' He has since rushed out again quicker than he rushed in. Though for a short time he caused fictitious prices to rule in rent, labour, and stock, yet he did almost irreparable damage to the working farmer, with whom he competed in an open-handed, unbusiness-like, and swaggering way, to end shortly in an abyss of meanness and twitch-grass. He never knew anything about farming, and only took it up that he might talk to his friends, yet unbitten by the same mania, about 'my little place in the country.' He commenced (for he had then plenty of money) by paying more than a fair rent—that is, more than the practical working farmers in the neighbourhood could afford to pay and get a living. As a consequence other landlords fancied that they were not getting enough, and raised *their* rents. Then many a good farmer gave notice in disgust, or, worse, stayed on and got ruined. Then, from not knowing or not caring (for though careful and close-fisted enough in his business—that is, when he had his apron on—he never treated farming as a business, but merely as a relaxation, something after the manner of a game of billiards), he would pay his men above their fair market wages. He not only overpaid them, but spoilt them by not looking after

them; or he had perhaps an expensive farm bailiff, who, as nobody looked after *him*, did unto others as he was done by. Off to the station in the morning whirled the apron-farmer without troubling to look round first, and back at night after dark; for, even if his town business didn't keep him, he had a club at which he found it pleasant to spend an hour or two. Saturday afternoon and Sunday were his great days for 'farming.' His town friends who were not rich enough or foolish enough to be apron-farmers, or who were trying to learn from him how to take up the business by-and-bye, would then drive out to him or come out by train. Very little farming would be done. A walk after a heavy lunch, if not too wet or muddy, just to get an appetite for dinner. Dinner when they got back to the house. Then champagne, port, claret, cigars, whisky, &c., and for the guests a drive home in the small hours. It would be found soon that after such generous potations (for people didn't go to see the apron-farmer to be fed by him on bread and cheese and small beer) driving through the dark lanes was not safe for the returning guests. So the hospitable apron-farmer would get one day on the Sanitary Board, or on the Board of Guardians, or on some other body formed for spending public money, and go in for a costly scheme of gas lamps, the gas to be brought from the town nine or ten miles off. It was sometimes difficult for the apron-farmer, who might be a Town Councillor, to equally hold the balance when the interests of the town of which he was so great an ornament militated against those of his adopted parish. Up would go the rates. After one little job was successfully settled he would retire, only to appear again shortly on another Board to work another. The diamond rings would suddenly flash upon the astonished farmers who had hitherto had sleepy control of the Highway Board. Immense quantities of metal would be laid down, with the gratifying effect that the apron-farmer could one day drive home from his club without his portly person being jolted to any very damaging extent. But business gets bad. Who would ever have dreamt of such a possibility? The apron-farmer found that he had enough to do, and perhaps too much, to keep his works in town going without throwing away money in the country. So he got out of farming as quickly as possible. The labourers are thrown out of work. The farm is left in bad order—so bad indeed that the working farmer who had been sent off to make way for his flourishing rival declines to come back

again. If let, the farm must be taken at a great reduction in rent. But other land in the neighbourhood has been rushed up, and it takes some years and a good many broken farmers to put things right again. When they are got straight, agriculture (either preceding 'business' in its decay, or itself causing the collapse in every other trade—who can say?) has got into a bad way. Rents have to go down. But the rates stay up, and the gas lamps continue to flaunt about the deserted residence of the late apron-farmer as if he were still entertaining his uproarious guests when he has long since passed into bankruptcy. A few pampered and demoralised rabbits play their pranks at night beneath the gas lamps which compete lavishly with their half-forgotten moon. The mischievous race of apron-farmers may now be classed with other extinct breeds of animals which have had their day. The 'fad' has long since been discovered to be too costly for bad times. In its palmiest days it returned but little interest on the outlay. But it will be long before the harm caused by the genus can be repaired, or the fictitious conditions imposed by it on certain localities can be entirely removed.

It will be readily imagined that in the service of this energetic dealer I was not very idle. Indeed, I had a liking for hard work. It was wearisome work sometimes, travelling by train from market to market—though it was then that I first found the full benefit of being able to read—and I greatly preferred escorting by road lots of cattle bought from the different farmers to their destinations on other homesteads. There was a strong family likeness in the cattle generally, and very little difference in their owners; but as no two sheep are alike to a shepherd, so I got in time to find slight differences in the farmers and their establishments, though sometimes it was only in the size of the mugs in which the inevitable cider was handed about. It was not very long before I began to know something about stock. My new master, for the sake of his own interests, was naturally anxious that I should gain some knowledge of his business, and if I had paid him a premium, instead of drawing as I did very fair weekly wages, he could not possibly have taken more pains with my education. In B—— cattle market, when trade was dull and butchers deaf to his blandishments, we used to fill up the time by making careful separate estimates of the weight of the cattle we had for sale. With these estimates on next market day we would compare the real weight as returned by the butchers to

whom the cattle had been sold. There was no difficulty in this, as in a dull market cattle are generally sold by weight. This amusement was all very well and improving for me, but it was a great proof of modesty that my master imagined that there was any room for improvement in him. But I have often noticed since that men with most knowledge are most anxious to acquire more. By constant practice I got at last to be a fair judge, and week by week my estimates gave less cause for merriment. A dealer's appreciation of a joke is generally strictly limited to the trade.

The 2*l.* 18*s.* was now fast growing into quite a respectable sum, which was safely lodged in the savings bank. I had my weekly wages, and farmers and others used in addition often to give me a shilling or two. Some of these donations were, I dare say, extracted from the pockets of niggardly farmers from a wish to induce me to speak more favourably of their stock than it deserved. If this was so, I can only say that their tips might as well have remained in the 'avaricious nooks' from which they were so unprofitably extracted. I had some funny journeys about the country with cattle. Once we had bought a big lot of Anglesea bullocks, which I drove up to Shrewsbury by slow stages, but was unable to sell there. Several other places I visited with them, but the farther they walked the less any one would bid for them.

The Anglesea bullocks passed into a proverb down our way, where it is still the custom, instead of calling a useless thing you can't get rid of a white elephant (as I have heard is the case elsewhere), to call it an Anglesea bullock. When you have got Anglesea bullocks to part with, your first object should be to persuade somebody else that he cannot prosper without them.

I had been with the dealer about four years, when he died very suddenly from some little ailment which he was too careless to attend to, or perhaps was obliged to neglect, as he was so tied to his business that he could not absent himself, or thought he could not. Yet, good man as he was, the world has somehow or other got on since without him. He left himself no margin of strength at all, but used himself up completely every day before bedtime—or, rather, before he went to bed—so that there was nothing to fight with, and so, as I said, he died. It seemed as if very little good had come of all this slaving at business, and some people went so far as to pity him, in that, in their view, he

had got no fun out of his life. I certainly knew him well enough to be certain that he would have got no enjoyment out of it in any other way. All men are not similarly constituted, and there may be professions generally thought less seductive than cattle-dealing, on the followers of which a good deal of pity is wasted by men who cannot understand that there are persons who, fortunately for themselves, take a pride in doing well whatever they have to do. I lost a good master on the day he died. To my astonishment, when I went in to see him the day before his death, he put his thin hand under his pillow and handed me fifty pounds in ten-pound notes. He said not a word, but I felt the pressure of his hand for the first and last time, and my eyes filled with tears. His own eyes had a weary look; whether from illness, or because he could not go on dealing, or because he was just a little tired of dealing and wished he could have thought of something else, it is impossible for me to say. 'God bless you!' I said, but the words seemed to have very little meaning to him. Any heaven without a cattle market at least twice a week he would have found very dull. He looked wearied and worn out, and motioned me away. He had been an honest man, and had wronged no one. On the contrary, he had done much good, and forgiven many who had wronged him. I think his only feeling with regard to dying was a dread of enforced idleness. There are many to whom this would not be a very terrifying prospect.

Shortly after the funeral, I saw one of his few relations who had come down to see to his affairs, and told him about the 50*l*. I was told that he had asked for that sum, and said that he was going to make me a present as a reward for what he called my zeal. So my mind was easy. I did not at first know what to turn to. It would have been a great drop to have taken on with a little second-rate dealer after having been so long with the chief of them. I could have got a place directly, I dare say, as I had now the reputation, in addition to other things, of being a good man with cattle; but I made up my mind to try first what I could do on a small farm. I had with the 50*l*. about 200*l*. saved. This sounds to some, I dare say, a great deal of money for me to have got together almost entirely in four years. But, as I said before, my wages were good—I had learnt the lesson how to save—and many of our customers used to make a practice of giving me something whenever they had a deal with the master. I had few expenses, for I almost always got my victuals given me, so it was really no trouble to

save money. There was nothing to spend money on, except drink; and besides that I did not care greatly for good liquor, and had a horror of the fearful stuff with which dealers in general ruin their insides, if I had spent my money on drink I should soon have had to look out for another place. I willingly allow that without some exceptional circumstances I could not possibly have saved so much. But I wish to point out that there are always positions of trust, such as that of farm-bailiff, &c., which bring better wages than a common agricultural labourer can hope for as long as he remains such. These positions are open to men who prove themselves capable of rising. They are to many what the good parson said reading and writing would be to me, the first step on the ladder. Afterwards, other things offer; but all agricultural labourers are not fitted to rise to the head of affairs, nor am I aware that there is any profession where all are captains, and there is no rank and file. It is absurd to say, as has been said recently, that a married man with a family can save enough out of 12s. a week to take a small farm.

The farm that I thought myself lucky to get hold of consisted of twenty-five acres only, all grass, divided into five or six little fields, and with a snug little homestead upon it near the high road. I gave 3*l.* per acre for it, besides paying rates and taxes, which were very heavy. I should be sorry to give 1*l.* per acre now. I will at once say that I should speedily have lost my little savings if I had been a common farmer—I mean if I had depended for my rent on the profits of the few animals I could have kept on this little farm, or the hay I could have grown on it. I soon got together a little connection as a dealer. I am not quite sure, though sorry to have to say so, that it is an unmixed advantage to a dealer to be temperate and sober. If he means to be temperate he must have a cast-iron will, while if he is to be the reverse he must have a cast-iron head and inside, so as to be able to drink with impunity the awful stuff served at the public-houses these men are forced to frequent. Without these last he would have D.T. in a month or two. There is no profession, save that of the 'betting ring,' which demands more strength of constitution than does 'dealing.' The two have indeed a good deal in common. The professors of both are travelling night and day, and must be insensible to fatigue. Competition is keen in both—in good times, at least—and the mind must be quickly made up. Brag and bluster go pretty far with both—of course not in an exception such as my late master,

a few of whom, were it possible to imagine their existence, would have revolutionised the trade. Many who felt envy of his success (one of these—a drunken but clever fellow enough—once remarked to me in a hurt tone that he supposed I didn't consider him fit to black D——'s boots, to which I quite honestly replied that I didn't) are alive and well, though they get drunk after every market on the vilest of vile liquors; and I suppose they have now ceased to feel any envy. I will also say that though I am grateful for my educational advantages, and the taste implanted in me by the good parson for better things, and even to some extent for the literature of our country, I have never lost sight of the fact that education (I am not speaking now of the higher sort) will sometimes impair or prevent us from educating memory. I have known extraordinary instances of memory in working-men of which we shall probably see no more, since reading and writing are making the rising generation independent of memory, and it is bad economy to keep a horse in the stable for which you have no work.

I once knew very well a bailiff on a large farm, kept up in the highest state of cultivation (as will be understood when I say that a portion of it formed one of the best hop-gardens in the best hop district of England), all whose accounts were kept by notches on an old thatch-peg. Once every fortnight his master, who lived ten miles off on another farm, visited him; and the bailiff, stick in hand, would recount the history of the fourteen days. So many bags of wheat gone; so many sheep, &c., sold. He was never known to make a mistake, and his master used to amuse his friends by trotting out, as it were, the bailiff's memory, and asking questions as to the farming affairs of past years. It was no trouble to the bailiff, apparently, to recall the exact crops grown on any given field in any given year, the price paid for them, and the subsequent treatment. Betting men have still a good deal of this power of memory, and will tell you in a moment what horse won any particular race in any past year. The retention of memory by these last is no exception to my rule, as the heads of betting men (who, to give them their due, are not uneducated according to their lights) are used to performing feats of extempore calculating which would have done honour to the once celebrated calculating boy.

I had not been long on my little farm before I discovered that the palmy days of dealing (and of farming also) were passed. During the 'rinderpest' year—with which plague may Heaven

never again see fit to afflict poor farmers and their cows!—some of us who were in a big way of business made their fortunes, as the whole trade was temporarily in the dealers' hands. We had, in my part, fortunately no experience of genuine rinderpest, though we had a sham attack. Some of our meadows threw up, in the spring, tall green leaves of saffron—autumn crocus or colchicum—which, when it grew thickly, had quite the appearance of an early bite, and was irresistible to cattle carelessly or through ignorance turned out on fields where it luxuriated. A local landlord, mistrusting native talent, imported a new agent from Norfolk—much too grand a place, I suppose, for saffron to be allowed to colonise. In the spring the new agent caused to be turned out on the home farm a lot of poor hungry store cattle with which I had just supplied him. In a day or two we heard, to our dismay, that the Government inspector had been sent for to examine the herd, and had pronounced it to be attacked with rinderpest. He straightway ordered the whole of the cattle on the farm, to the number of about fifty, to be pole-axed. There was a good deal of relief, not unmingled with laughter at the agent's and inspector's expense, when it was decided by local judges, from the best information they could obtain, that it was only a case of our old friend 'saffron.' It must have been long before the agent forgot the qualities of that previously unknown herb.

The most modest of men are apt to thank themselves for their successes. But on looking into them we often, if honest, have to acknowledge that, without some event with which our merits had little, or more probably nothing, to do, our virtues might have wasted their sweetness. For instance, if nobody died there would be few vacancies, and scarcely any promotions, since those who have gained a position are seldom eager to retire from it, and are not often called to account for errors which it requires some courage in the new aspirants to expose. A man may be wearied with readiness to step into the Siloam of patronage or promotion, but cannot always depend on help down the steps. At a turning-point for me, a self-taught but capable man, who had risen from estate carpenter to the post of manager on a neighbouring estate, died very suddenly in middle age. Farming troubles were in the air, and it was with much surprise that I received a note one morning, asking me to meet Colonel — in B— next week, after market. I attended as requested, and he then and there paid me the great compliment of offering me the agency of his estate.

I accepted it not without some inward trembling, after it had been shown to me that I was at least as likely to prove capable of doing what was required as the man just departed. I stood well at the time with both small and large farmers. The majority of the tenants on the estate were of the former description, and held from 50 to 120 acres. I will at once say that I have not had, and I hope my employer has never had, cause to regret my decision. He was a first-rate man, who had served in the army in his youth, and was now M.P. for —, but he resided mostly in London, and only by fits and starts did he show much interest in his farming affairs. To his credit I will say that never did he behave harshly to a tenant. Within the last few years he has reduced his rents, without flinching, quite 40 per cent. on the average, and his tenants are in as good a position as most. Far too little has been said of the honourable and self-denying way in which landlords (with the exception of a few who have unfortunately got possession of land, and who treat their tenants as if they were so much hardware) have behaved in the present crisis. It must be seen, however, that no reduction, even down to total remission of rent, will meet cases, now arising on all sides, where the profits of a farm are frequently insufficient, under the best management, to meet rates, taxes, and necessary expenditure, putting rent altogether out of the question. What, then, it may be asked, is to become of the landlord? Abolish him, some say. Yes; but substitute whom? Those who advocate the substitution of local authorities elected by ratepayers for the old landlords should remember that in public bodies kindheartedness and generosity, if they could be imagined to exist, would be crimes punishable by prosecution. I am doubtless a poor politician—I hate the name—but I can plainly see that agriculture must go to the wall unless something is done for it, and that quickly.

I had, perhaps, the less trouble in giving satisfaction to my new employer, as it was undoubtedly the fact that some of his neighbours were worse off. A big agent who looked after quite a number of estates—it was our friend of the mock rinderpest, in fact—had a sort of factory near us from which he turned out any number of young men warranted capable of anything under the sun. These boys, who had generally been first proved to be incapable of passing the preliminary examination required by some other profession, were sent to be trained as land agents, as the fool of a family used to be sent to sea, but it is to be feared

with less ultimate success. They paid a big premium on arriving, and for a year or two they shot and hunted about the neighbourhood, where they were chiefly useful, though by their superior airs and graces most obnoxious to the young farmers, at the annual ball. As they occasionally accompanied the agent on horseback around the estates that he superintended, during which circuits they amused themselves by 'larking' while he attended to the necessary details, the agent thought himself justified at an early date in pronouncing them fit to manage estates in parts of England of which it may be confidently asserted that they knew nothing at all. I cannot remember that the agent showed any great desire to settle them in close proximity to himself. Some of them might, indeed, have done him little credit. I never used to hear much as to how they got on in their new positions. But after a certain or uncertain number of costly mistakes even a fool, unless he is a bigger fool than usual, may get inoculated with a few simple facts. If he is a bigger fool than usual he is excused as such. The knowledge that these young gentlemen were my competitors gave me confidence in my new life, though I hope it never made me careless.

I now had a comfortable little house near the entrance to the small park surrounding the Hall, which was generally unoccupied for nearly nine months of the year except by a servant or two. It was a pretty little house, and only wanted one thing—a mistress. Where to get that one thing I didn't know. I was, indeed, far from the days when the rabbit-catcher's daughter had thought it possible to make a conquest of me. Coming home to my solitary dinner, I would hurry over it, making notes meanwhile by the side of my plate of my routine of duties for next day. I got so accustomed to using this time of the day for business mementoes that I have never been able to drop the practice since, to 'somebody's' occasional annoyance.

After dinner I used to put all work away, and try to enjoy myself. I was not without some few good standard works, and by my fireside, with my dog, my pipe, and my book, I did not, perhaps, look an object for pity. But it was dull work. All day I was busy enough from morning to night, and if nothing special offered I would invent something, or even do to-day what might as well, or better, have been done to-morrow. But the hours passed slowly at night. Sometimes I got hold of a book which made me oblivious of the lapse of time. The squire's library

was generously put at my disposal. Unfortunately—or fortunately, perhaps, since it made me look out for myself—the squire, judging from the contents of his shelves, had never been much of a reader, unless, indeed, he carried his pet books about with him. His library chiefly consisted of doubtless excellent, if very ancient, religious works, and a number of classics remaining from his Oxford days, and an old Encyclopædia, which I imagined a treasure till I discovered accidentally (before I had made much progress through its very readable articles) that it had been long superseded. But the library at the town of B—— contained almost everything that could be required by students, advanced or the opposite, and to this I had access. Sometimes, I confess, I went to sleep soon after dinner in my chair by the fire, whether from the effects of fresh air or of the book I happened to be studying I cannot say. Though I seldom went out in the evening, I got by degrees to know the better sort of people about, who, though knowing perfectly well from what I had risen, yet did not allow the knowledge to appear in their treatment of me, if I except what to a sensitive mind might have seemed an occasional effort on their part to talk down to me. It was my determination that the cause for this, if it existed, should be removed.

Our village rector—once more I was to be indebted for aid to a parson—was a man of a far different sort to the one of whom I have spoken before. I had seen very little of parsons for some years. Our rector hated society, and sat indoors over his books, spectacles on nose, for the greater part of the year. He was unmarried, and his establishment consisted of an old butler, who also performed many other offices, and a housekeeper of mature years, who had known him since he was a boy, and, indeed, looked on him as a boy still and one who was hardly accountable for his actions and still required a nurse as of old. A few months after my arrival, I had the pleasure of being able to render the rector a small service on some question connected with his glebe, which he was totally unfit to manage (as he once told me, all he knew of farming he had learnt from Virgil), and he afterwards, to the general surprise, came out of his shell and tried to make himself agreeable to me. I am afraid he had almost forgotten the art. But finding me one winter's evening poring, half asleep, over a book by my fireside, he expressed astonishment that I should ever have had the opportunity of acquiring a taste for reading. I told him all about my old friend in C——dale, and how anxious I had

been ever since I had known him to do what I could to improve myself. After that he used often to call (I am quite sure, entirely on my account, for there could have been little pleasure to him then in associating with me), and in the kindest way he took care to model his talk so that I could profit by it, while he avoided as carefully as possible the appearance of talking to me as to a literary babe. He soon began to take charge of my reading, mentioning at almost each visit some book he thought I should read next. To this, I am sure, he gave his mind. He certainly put me through a most useful and interesting course of reading. In a year or so I began to have ideas on literary matters which I was sometimes bold enough to bring out even before him. I found my views generally amused him; once or twice they made him think, and he was pleased to tell me, with a sigh, that what he called my broad and practical ideas were more human and robust than those of the cloister, by which, I suppose, he meant his own. After a time I began to read some of the poets, and entirely new feelings awoke in me as in the breast of a traveller in a new country. At this study I think I soon distanced the rector, whose dry and matter-of-fact nature it doubtless was which caused him to prefer prose, though I tried to show him on several occasions that prose writers, and even historians, have as much imagination, and are as little inclined to be particular as to the accuracy of their statements, as any poet of them all. There is something to love in every man when you get to know him, or in almost every man. Who could help loving the man, whose kind and tender heart was on his sleeve, every time he caressed his valued tomes before reluctantly putting them away for the day? Poor fellow! he had nothing less inanimate to caress. Yet I am not sure he was to be pitied for that. It is only the loved ones who can inflict pain.

In summer it was not quite such melancholy work. I could keep out of doors until almost bed-time. It was a great neighbourhood for lawn-tennis, which game had just become the rage. Scarcely a week passed without a party or two being held, to which I often got invitations. I seldom, however, availed myself of them, my education in that line having been neglected. I did fairly well now on horseback, having commenced with a quiet cob which had belonged to my predecessor; yet I had no mind to begin to learn lawn-tennis, and to get laughed at by the smart young farmers' daughters and their brothers who had got the start of me by a year or two. I confess that at first I attended a few of

these parties and looked rather eagerly round to see if among these blooming damsels might be found one who would make home a little more cheerful, or at all events a little less dull, to me. But there was always something wanting to my eye, though I know well that the least charming of the young ladies would have been generally considered good enough, if not too good, for one who had risen from the plough. Certain it is that my fancy—to put my heart out of the question—was never touched, and that I soon gave up going to parties at all. Nor do I think that my absence was greatly deplored.

About this time a little adventure happened to me which finally demolished all chances that any of our local belles might have possessed. I had to go to London to see the Colonel on business. I had several times previously been to London, but always found that I liked the country best, so was making my way back to the station as soon as our business was concluded. Walking as fast as I could go up Piccadilly, I was slowly passed by a four-wheeler, the driver of which was keeping close to the kerbstone, and something that I saw in the four-wheeler made my heart beat as it had not done for ten years. A lady was sitting nearest the window on the back seat of the cab, her face half turned from me as if she was talking to some one seated on the other side of her. I was certain in a moment that the lady was no other than Miss Brown. I followed the cab without thinking; had I given myself time for thought I should perhaps not have done so. The cab was going at no breakneck speed, and I easily kept it in view until I hailed a hansom, the driver of which I directed to follow the four-wheeler.

By the disgusted look which the smart driver gave me, I judge that hansom cabs are not often set to watch four-wheelers. However, his penance was not to be a long one. Presently the four-wheeler turned under an archway to the right, and entered a square, where it drew up at a portico, at which the lady and a younger one who accompanied her alighted. Seeing that it was some place of exhibition, I also paid off my cabman and followed them. I hurried up the steps, at the top of which I was delayed for a short time, as a group of persons were passing through the turnstile. When I had paid and passed through, the two ladies had disappeared. I hurried breathlessly through two or three rooms hung with pictures from floor to ceiling. The room was crowded with fashionably dressed ladies and gentlemen, the latter

of whom were mostly inspecting the pictures, while the former inspected each other. People dawdled about so, and stood here and there in such impassable crowds, round some celebrated picture, I suppose, that it was hard to get along, and I got stared at a good deal, not, as I at first feared, on account of my countrified dress, but I think because I was the only person in the place who seemed to be in a hurry. I could see that finding anybody here, though a matter of tolerable certainty in the end, might be a labour of some time. It was quite possible for me to follow the object of my search from room to room, keeping always a room behind until she departed, when I might have the satisfaction, if I was lucky, of catching a glimpse of her skirts as she passed out. I hit, therefore, upon what I considered a more feasible plan. Taking my seat opposite a picture which, though I could see nothing of it, I judged, from the swaying and pushing crowds struggling for a peep, to be one of the wonders of the exhibition, I waited patiently for the time when the lady I was seeking should arrive and give it, as she doubtless would, a minute of her time. Soothed by the perpetual swishing of the ladies' dresses as they swept by me, I almost think I must have dropped off for a minute or two into a half-doze. I was on the farm in C—dale again. It was evening. The farmer had just driven up in his gig, from which a young lady was descending. She passed quickly through the little-used front door which creaked so when it was opened, and I saw her no more. I woke with a start (or rather came to life again—I don't think I had been asleep), and, after looking carefully round the room, fixed my eyes on the opposite wall. A man whose taste in pictures is uneducated, as mine was and is, will care most for representations of what he knows best. I had chanced on a whole group of farming pictures. To the left was a very tolerable donkey, munching away complacently at a very real thistle. I was delighted to find that painters still believed that donkeys eat thistles. It is a sadly sceptical age. To my right was a reckless mower cutting his legs off with all his might in a fine field of mowing-grass nearly two inches high—not a very paying crop for a rate-supported small holding. The mower had missed his legs by a miracle this time, and his scythe had got far away behind him, though he did not seem to trouble about it. I shuddered to think what the consequences must be if he was rash enough to make another stroke. The picture was, however, as like mowing as the statements in

some political pamphlets are like farming. If the pamphlets were to be illustrated, I thought, here is the man to do it. The crowds were still pushing and surging round the picture which I supposed to be a famous one, and which I had not yet seen. Thanking my stars that I had decided on waiting at a part where my services as agricultural critic might be of some use, I looked over the heads of the crowd studying or trying to study the famous picture, and saw high up a picture which was worth all the rest of the exhibition together.

A blue hill in the distance, behind which the setting sun of a dark November day was going down in clouds; at the foot of the hill the country was broken up into fields divided by wide straggling hedges. There was the rough, rushy, bluish pasture, the grey unploughed stubble, and in the foreground a team of three horses standing perfectly still in a wet furrow ploughed in the clay soil; one of the horses was a grey, and I thought of old Captain, though it was not much like him. The ploughman stood with his back to the plough, on which he was leaning, and his face turned towards the hill. His boy was standing by the team, whip in hand, as if wondering when the order would be given to move on. The twitch ran like thick white threads through the furrow, and if the horses had been started I should have expected to hear the sharp tear of the share through it. There was no sunshine at all on horses or ploughman, which were in the shadow of the hill; and the picture, for all that it was so lifelike, was as sad and gloomy as a picture could be. The cloudy sunset, the lifeless horses, and the dreamy ploughman with his side-face towards me were quite moving in their hopeless sadness. I got up to examine it better, but when I got nearer found I could not see it at all, and so passed to the other side of the room to get a better view. It was rather curious that I should meet Miss Brown after so many years in front of the picture which might almost have been meant for the old clay farm where I first saw her.

I looked at her and bashfully raised my hat. She had evidently no recollection of me at all, and a confused look came over her face. She had grown more womanly, and more lovely, if possible, but there was no possibility of my mistaking her. A charming blush appeared, then a little look in the eyes as of half-doubtful recognition, which gave way to surprise, which again became confused. She bowed and passed on with her companion.

What to do now? Was she to be found after so long only that she might be as quickly lost again? Should I follow her? I looked back for an instant at the picture of the disconsolate ploughman. A change had come over it—a ray of sunlight descending through who knows which skylight, after having been strained through who can tell what thickness of smoke and fog; but still a ray for all that. Was it fancy, or was there now a smile on the ploughman's face in place of despair? His eyes were now looking towards the hill, as if he expected to see some one coming over it. Lighted up by the ray of light he looked quite different. Well; there was a difference in me too. No wonder she did not know me. I was glad now she had not recognised me. She would have known me quickly enough in my old dress, and I dare swear would not have passed me by. It was some comfort to me to know that I was now a more fit subject for recognition. That look of surprise in her face! Did she know me after all? I would at least see where she lived, and find out if I could what her circumstances were. She might be married—but what to me if she were? Yet something told me surely that she was not married. All this in a moment. It was a matter of but another second or two—the room had thinned somewhat within the last quarter of an hour—for me to find myself a few yards behind her. She never looked back or turned her eyes to either side. She appeared to be hurrying her companion along, yet walked as if somewhat upset and overcome. The top of the stairs was reached. They passed through the turnstile, descended the steps, and entered a cab at the entrance. I kept behind the pillars of the porch till they were gone, when I once more followed their cab as I had followed it before. This time the chase was a much longer one. We passed up Piccadilly, turned to the right, and down through some narrow streets, when suddenly I saw we were passing a church I had noticed before. I knew very few buildings in London by sight, with the exception of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's. Emerging from the narrow streets, we entered another lined on each side with fashionable shops, purveyors, &c., to Her Majesty almost all of them. Then turning to the right, we entered a large square with the usual garden in the middle. Squares are all alike to countrymen, as sheep are to townsfolk, but on the corner house I read a name I knew. The cab drove round two sides of the square and stopped before a house which was as like other houses to left and right of it as one

square is like another square. Here the ladies descended, paid the driver, and, opening the door with a latch-key, entered. The cab drove off, the door closed behind them. It was the house where I had been in the morning—the house of Colonel ——.

I speedily resolved—if in my state of mind anything I did could be said to be resolved on—not to leave London that night. I went back to my hotel. There I dined alone—dined without eating anything—in a state of excitement which bewildered me. ‘What is the matter?’ I asked myself as I fidgeted about, or sprang up from the dinner-table to reseat myself immediately, to the dismay of the German waiter and the admiration of an old gentleman with a gold eye-glass who was dining at the same table, and who eyed me as if he was a mad doctor (which he may have been for aught I know) diagnosing a patient. Perhaps, unless highly fee’d, the old gentleman would not have thought me a madman if he had known all. I had met once again, after so many years, the being who had always represented to me all that was pure and noble in woman; one to whom I felt myself as much indebted for the changes that had come to my life as to my various friendly parsons. The changes that made me not ashamed to meet her, and yet—oh, spite of fate!—prevented her from knowing me. I had met her again. I did not attempt to explain to myself the fact that she had entered Colonel ——’s house as if she were an inmate. That puzzle I knew would not take long to decipher.

When I had finished my dinner, or rather when the waiter gave up asking me to eat, I rose and went out. Where I went I do not remember, but I found myself about midnight opposite Colonel ——’s house again. The lights were out. Everybody had apparently retired for the night. That was of no consequence. She was there, and to-morrow I would know more.

I have said nothing of Colonel ——’s family, no reason having hitherto occurred for their introduction. And, indeed, I knew very little about it myself. He was a widower, and I knew he had two daughters, but I had never seen them. On the few occasions on which Colonel —— had been at the Hall since my engagement, he had been alone, and I understood from him that his daughters were abroad. They were coming down, I knew, for next winter. But how to account for Miss Brown’s presence in his house? I wisely put speculation on one side. I was never very fond of puzzling over the superscription of a letter when I could solve the

mystery by breaking the seal. I went to bed, and no one will suppose I could fancy myself in love when I say I went to sleep directly, and slept till morning without the ghost of a dream.

It would be easy to feign—but I was not fond of feigning—some forgotten detail of business to excuse a call on Colonel —— (who supposed me safely out of town) next morning. I arrived at the house before he had left it after breakfast. He appeared surprised when I was shown into his study, and waited for me to announce my business. He looked a little impatient when I did not do so as quickly as usual. The fact is, I was thinking it over in my mind. The Colonel, I said to myself, likes straightforward dealing, so here goes.

‘I have not come on your business to-day, sir,’ I said at last, ‘but to ask you to explain for me a little mystery which I don’t understand. Some years ago, when I was a waggoner in S——shire—a great many years ago it seems now—a young lady came to stay with a Mr. Smith, the farmer I worked for. I thought a great deal of her’—(I didn’t want to make him laugh by saying how much I thought of her; the Colonel had probably ceased to believe in angels)—‘and I’ve never forgotten her. She it was, and the parson there, who made me wish and strive so to become something better than a ploughman’—(the Colonel began to look interested, and ceased smoking his cigar). ‘I have lost sight of her all these years, and had long given up all hope of ever seeing her again; but yesterday I met her at the Royal Academy Exhibition, or rather’ (for that was not quite correct) ‘I met her in Piccadilly and followed her. She did not know me when I bowed to her. It would have been a wonder if she had. What was I to do? Was I to lose sight of her for ever? I did better than that; I followed her once more, and, to my astonishment, saw her arrive at this house, and pass in as if she lived here. And now I want you to tell me who Miss Brown is, and what she is doing here. I hope you don’t think I’ve done wrong, or that what I am asking you is wrong. But I know if you think so you’ll say so.’

The Colonel got up from his chair, his cigar had gone out, and before he said anything he quietly lit it again, and strolled to the mirror over the mantelpiece to make sure, I suppose, that it was well alight. As the Colonel stood with his back to me looking at the end of his cigar, I caught a glimpse of his face for a moment in the mirror, and saw that he was laughing silently, but so heartily that he had at last to take the cigar out of his mouth again.

Whether he caught my look of surprise or not I cannot say, but he became in an instant grave as a judge, and, wheeling round in military fashion, faced me again. He came forward and held out his hand. I thought his grip was a more friendly one than usual.

‘You did quite right, quite right,’ he said; ‘I don’t see why you should not try to find out about an old acquaintance, particularly as you feel so strongly about it. Your feelings, I am sure, do you honour.’ Here he suddenly broke off. ‘And now you must excuse me for awhile, I have to go out. By-the-bye,’ as I looked, I suppose, rather disappointed, ‘will you be kind enough, if you can spare time, to look in at lunch-time—I have something to arrange about before you go down? I suppose you’ll go this evening?’

Well, I *was* disappointed. What did I want with his lunch? and what was I to do in the meantime? I will go and look at the ploughman again, I said to myself when I got out in the street. So I went and looked at the ploughman, who, poor fellow! was just as gloomy as ever again, and had forgotten the little ray which had so changed him yesterday afternoon.

I knew better than to be unpunctual at lunch. Precisely at the appointed hour I was shown into the Colonel’s study. There was nobody there. Soon the gong sounded, and the butler came in and told me that lunch was ready, and would I please walk into the dining-room. I did so. The Colonel stood on the rug with his back to the empty fireplace, and two ladies were standing by one of the windows. The Colonel came forward. ‘Let me introduce you to my daughter Ellen and to Miss Brown.’ The ladies turned from the window, and of course they were the two ladies I had seen at the picture-gallery. ‘Mr. —,’ continued the Colonel, ‘is my agent at B——.’ The Colonel must have said something in preparation, for Miss Brown came forward with a blush and held out her hand.

‘I am so glad to see you again,’ she said, ‘I have so often thought of you, and wondered what you were doing. I always felt you would do well if you had a chance. But how was it possible that I should recognise you yesterday?’

‘Yet I recognised you,’ I said; ‘and do you know, I fancied for a moment that you knew me.’

‘I seemed,’ she replied, ‘to know your face, and yet could not remember where I had met you. Besides, you are much altered.

You have gone on improving ever since I saw you, while I——' Here she sighed.

The conversation was broken off by a peremptory call from the Colonel, who was seated at the lunch-table. But when the meal was over he kindly went out, and I stayed for an hour and had the most delightful talk I had ever had in my life. Miss Brown's father had died some years ago. He had been considered well off, but at his death there was found to be very little left, so she determined to go out as a governess. She had been tolerably happy, she told me, having fortunately chanced on people who had treated her as a friend, and a few months since she had taken the situation of governess, or, more properly speaking, companion, to Colonel ——'s daughters. For all that she insisted so on her having been so happy and fortunate, I thought it very possible that the happiness had sprung more from herself than others. There were some lines on her face, too, which should not have been there. She had grown quieter and more thoughtful-looking, and I fancied that sometimes her smile was more grave than gay. I told her, of course, much about my own good fortune. I did not then say how much of it I attributed to her. Something might well be reserved for another occasion. She would be down in the country soon, and occasions I felt sure would arise. If not I should have to manufacture them. We parted like old friends, as indeed we were. Some old friends who are always together have their little quarrels and disagreements, as is natural. Once in a year or so they may think scorn of each other—soon to repent, it may be; but my thoughts had been true to her all along.

When she came to the country I heard more of her history. We talked over our lives together, and I could see that she was pleased and proud that I attributed my rise partly to her. One day I asked her if she would add one more blessing to the life she had already done so much to brighten. The consequence of the answer was that the Colonel's daughters lost their governess, though not, I trust, their friend.

THE ANNALS OF BILLIARDS.

THE origin of billiards, like that of Topsy, is involved in obscurity. No doubt the game 'grewed' into its present shape; but whence it sprang no deponent (who can be relied on) sayeth. France, England, Spain, and Italy have been credited by various writers with the invention of the game. The safe conclusion is that possibly one of these guesses may be right. At all events, they cover between them a considerable amount of ground.

Cotton ('Compleat Gamester,' 1674), the earliest English writer on this 'gentile, cleanly, and most ingenious game,' informs us that a billiard-table is 'something longer than it is broad,' and that it is 'rail'd round, which rail ought to be a little swell'd or stuf't with fine flox [wool] or cotton.' List was used later, and indiarubber cushions were introduced about 1835. The bed of the table was made of oak, and subsequently of marble. Slate beds were first manufactured about 1827. The pockets, called 'Hazards,' were sometimes 'Wooden Boxes,' but those which had nets 'hanging at the bottoms' were more 'commendable.' The game was played with two small 'Ivory Balls and two Sticks,' reminding one of the American definition of billiards, 'playing marbles with a stick.' The 'sticks' (sometimes called 'masts,' now corrupted into 'maces') were made of Brazil wood, or *lignum vitæ*, and at the broad end were 'tipt with Ivory.'

In Cotton's time cue-playing was barely known at billiards; but if a player's ball was close under the cushion, he might use the small end of his stick. At the contemporary game of 'Trucks,' 'good gamesters' played with the small end of their 'tacks,' which were tapering and much bigger than billiard-sticks—in fact, cues.

Considering the example set by good truck-gamesters, it is surprising that it took more than a hundred years for cue-playing to become general at billiards. In Seymour's 'Compleat Gamester,' 1734, the mace and the stick (cue) are clearly distinguished, and in 'Hoyle's Games Revised' (1779), though, in the general directions, mace-play only is spoken of, it appears by

the laws that matches were played with maces only, with cues only, or mace against cue, by agreement; and it is interesting to observe that a player agreeing to play with the point of the cue must not use the butt, but might play with the point of a long cue 'over a mace.' This shows that the rest had not then been thought of. Indeed, White, 'Treatise on Billiards,' as late as 1818, makes no mention of a rest. He repeats the above rule, but with the misprint of 'or' a mace for 'over' a mace.

There can be but little doubt that about the end of the eighteenth century the relative merits of mace and cue play were engaging the attention of English players. In Beaufort's 'Hoyle's Games' (1788) the preference is given to the mace, as being the more powerful instrument of the two. Foreigners, for the most part, held the mace 'in contempt,' and used the cue with 'amazing address.' The 'peculiar advantage' of the mace was that which 'professed players artfully introduced under the name of trailing—that is, following the ball with the mace to such a convenient distance from the other ball as to make it an easy hazard.' Trailing, or raking, was a stroke of doubtful propriety. Cotton says: 'Have a care of raking, for if it be not a forfeiture it is a fault hardly excusable.' White denounces trailing as 'an unfair mode of play, introduced and only practised by swindlers.' The French rules only allowed trailing by agreement. The 'Académie des Jeux' (1805) says: 'Si l'un des Joueurs traîne, il est obligé de le dire avant de commencer la partie, sans quoi il sera obligé de l'achever sans traîner.' Mace playing, and with it trailing, may be said roughly to have gone out with the last century. White (1807) observes that 'of these instruments [mace and cue] the cue is by far most universally in use. It possesses various advantages over the mace, and is invariably preferred by all good players.'

The slow progress of the cue may be accounted for by the absence of the tip. The naked wood was used to strike with until shortly after the beginning of the present century. We have it on the authority of a gentleman who played with the celebrated Carr, early in this century, that players of his day often roughed and chalked the wood of their cues by twisting the butt-end in their hands, while the point was pressed against a white-washed ceiling! About 1807 the leathern tip was invented by a French professional player named Mignaud. Carr is credited with the invention of chalk; but probably we are indebted to the

whitewashed ceiling and the file for chalk and sandpaper. Subject to improvements in manufacture, such as calf-cheek tips and weighting the butt-end, the cue of the present day remains much as Mignaud left it.

The game played on the table something longer than it was broad, with its wooden bed, its cloth 'the more freed from knots the better,' its cushions stuffed with floss, and its six 'holes,' was very different from what we understand as billiards.

On the table, about where the middle of the baulk-line now is, was placed an ivory 'king,' something like a nine-pin; and about where the pyramid spot now is was placed an ivory 'port,' or small arch. The game, played with two balls, was somewhat similar to single pool, holing the adversary's ball winning one, holing the striker's ball losing one (hence the terms *winning* and *losing* hazards). In addition, a player, after passing the port without knocking it down, scored one for touching the king (which stood 'very ticklishly') without knocking it down; also, having passed, he scored one for knocking down the king with his adversary's ball. A player who, having passed, touched the king, and made a winning hazard by the same stroke, scored two. After having passed, a player touching the king, or making a winning hazard, had another stroke. It appears that misses lost nothing; for it was considered good play to lie 'abscond,' that is, 'to lie at bo-peep with your Adversary, either subtly to gain a pass or hazard,' the balls being masked by the intervening port or king. There were also certain penalties for knocking down port or king with your own ball and for foul strokes. Each point was called an 'end.' Five ends made a game by daylight, and three by 'candle-light,' 'in Houses that make a livelihood thereof;' but in private houses the game admitted of as many as the gamesters pleased. If a stander-by, after being 'advertised' not to 'instruct, direct, or speak in the Game,' offended 'in this nature,' for every fault he had 'instantly [to] forfeit Twopence for the good of the Company, or not be suffer'd to stay in the Room.'

In Seymour's 'Compleat Gamester' (1734), 'French Billiards, so called from their Manner of Playing the Game,' is introduced. This was only with masts and balls, the balls being much larger than before, and port and king being 'wholly laid aside.' The game was still a kind of single pool. A losing hazard lost two, a miss lost one, and a *coup* lost three. A winning hazard won two. The game was twelve up. A person blowing upon the ball when

running lost one; if near the hole, two; and a person shaking the table when the ball was running, or doing various other naughty things, lost one.

Hoyle did not write on billiards; but in editions of Hoyle published after his death (1769) billiards finds a place. In 'Hoyle's Games Improved, 1775,' French billiards, as described by Seymour, is called 'the common game.' The 'losing game' is also added, a losing hazard counting to the striker instead of against him; and the winning and losing game, at which all hazards counted to the striker. But the most important addition is the 'carambole' game. In this game a third ball, the red, was placed on the table, about where the baulk-spot now is, but at the other end of the table. The game was sixteen up, made by caramboles (afterwards called carams, now corrupted into cannons), and winning hazards, these scoring as at what is now known as 'billiards.' Also the baulk was introduced, which is made 'by pocketing the [adverse] white Ball, and bringing your own Ball and the red one below the Stringing Nail.' In modern parlance this is called 'potting the white and making a baulk'; a proceeding which many elderly gentlemen consider 'shabby,' and which is apt to provoke unseemly observations even from youthful opponents who are not gifted with angelic tempers. We are further told that carambole had lately been imported from France, and that it was generally played with a cue. This one would naturally expect, as many cannons, which are impossible with a mace, can be easily made with a cue, notwithstanding that it has no tip.

Shortly afterwards the losing carambole game began to be played. Here cannons and losing hazards counted to the striker, and winning hazards against him. A combination of a winning and losing hazard by the same stroke, as, for example, 'a pair of breeches,' counted the whole score to the striker.

Notwithstanding that carambole games were known in England at least as early as 1775, White, in 1807, speaks of them as having been 'recently' brought from France. 'Recently' is a somewhat elastic measure of time, and in this case it means about a third of a century. Possibly White refers more especially to 'the winning and losing carambole game,' which as *the* game of billiards was comparatively recent, and of which he was the first to treat thoroughly. This game is now called simply 'billiards.' It was played twenty-one or twenty-four up, and, according to

White, 'is now [1807] become so popular, that it may, at present, be properly called the common game of billiards.'

Still billiards was in a comparatively undeveloped state. It does not seem to have occurred to any one that billiards is essentially a game of precision. Thus, the table varied 'in size from nine to twelve feet long, and from four to six feet wide.' Fancy a table nine feet by four feet! The position of the red spot is not stated, but it was nearer to the top cushion than before. The position of the baulk-line is not given. It appears, from a carefully executed engraving which forms the frontispiece of White's work, to have been situated much where it now is. It had also, as now, a D-shaped 'ring' in the middle, in or on which a player had to spot his ball when striking from hand. The 'ring' being a semicircle, it was termed, by a happy fiction, 'the striking point.' The pockets seem to have been any size, at the discretion of the billiard-table makers. They were generally 'like hats.' No measurement is given of the balls; in the engraving just referred to all the three balls have different diameters.

As a consequence of the absence of a cue-tip, the only strokes recognised were the centre stroke, below the centre, above the centre and parallel with the table, and above the centre obliquely with the table (*masse* stroke). The idea of hitting a ball on one side or the other had not, apparently, entered the mind of man; or, if it had, it was only to caution other men against it. Thus, White tells the young player that he will 'seldom [be] able to give an even motion to his ball . . . if he strike it with the point of his cue.' 'This,' sagely continues the writer, 'arises from no defect either in the cloth, the cushion, or the rotundity of the ball; but it is the effect of the particular manner in which the point of the instrument is applied to the ball, and it requires some delicacy to avoid it.' It clearly never suggested itself to White that this uneven motion of the ball was due to its being struck slightly on one side.

Not long after this date a professional named Bartley kept some billiard-rooms at Bath. His marker was the afterwards famous Carr. When business was slack these two used to amuse themselves by playing for the losing hazard into the middle pocket from hand with gentle strength, the red being placed on the centre spot between the two middle pockets. Only Bartley could make the stroke, until he explained to Carr that it was accomplished by striking the white ball low *and on one side*. It must

be presumed that cue-tips had, by then, found their way to Bath, as a miss-cue would be the inevitable result of striking in the above manner with the naked wood. Carr was not slow to take advantage of this wrinkle, and he eventually became a great adept at side strokes. In 1825 he played a match against 'the Cork marker' (whose name has not, we believe, descended to posterity) at the Four Nations' Hotel, in the Opera Colonnade. Carr won three heats of 100 up, and in the second heat made twenty-two spot hazards. This was considered so prodigious a feat that he was immediately backed against all comers for a hundred guineas a side, and, in fact, became the first billiard champion of whom there is any record.

Meanwhile, Edwin Kentfield, of Brighton (better known as Jonathan), had not been idle. He was not only an excellent player, he also recognised the fact that good implements are necessary for good play; and he spent many years in improving tables, cushions, balls, cues, and so on. There must be numerous amateurs who still retain a lively recollection of the perfect appointments of Kentfield's subscription rooms.

Kentfield responded to the challenge to play Carr, but owing to Carr's illness the match never came off, and Kentfield was then styled champion; a title he retained until the year 1849. In 1839 he published 'The Game of Billiards, scientifically explained.' This was the best book on billiards that had appeared up to that date. In it Kentfield gave a set of laws, and much more accurate statements as to the positions of the spots, size of pockets, balls, &c. than had been previously printed. The title of the book was very appropriate; indeed, scientific billiards may be said to date from Kentfield's time.

Kentfield's largest break was 196 points, and his best spot break 57 hazards. The above breaks may be ranked as first-rate even in these days of sensational scoring, bearing in mind that the pockets of Kentfield's subscription table were exceedingly difficult.

In 1849 John Roberts (father of the present champion) challenged Kentfield for the championship. There is a tradition that Kentfield's position in the billiard world was so high, he had nothing to gain and much to lose by accepting the challenge. At least, this is certain—the two did not play, and Roberts held the title of champion until 1870. During all these years (1849–1870) Roberts played innumerable matches, successfully con-

ceding from two hundred and fifty to three hundred points in a thousand to all comers. No one ever dreamt of playing him on even terms at what we may call the English game (winning and losing carambole); for the French had by this time abandoned hazards altogether. The French game had become the cannon game on a table without pockets. Roberts says of himself that he practised the spot stroke for hundreds of hours, seeing how great an advantage a player has who can make pretty sure of a succession of 'spots' on gaining position. The fact once pointed out, the reason is not far to seek. The only *certainty* at billiards is, that when the red ball is holed it will be placed on the spot. Hence the position of this ball, after a red winning hazard, being absolutely determined, the striker has mainly to attend to the position his own ball will occupy after the stroke. It so happens that the position which gives another red winning hazard is fairly wide, so that if the white stops 'there or thereabouts' the spot break can be continued. Roberts attributes his superiority over other players of this period to his mastery of the 'spot'; but he was also a first-class all-round player. His best break was 346 (including 104 consecutive spot hazards). His best all-round break was 240 (including 102 cannons, the balls being jawed in a pocket).

Of course, the example of this great player was not lost on the younger professionals. They began assiduously practising the spot stroke; and in 1870 W. Cook, having beaten all previous records of exhibition matches, both spot and all-round, challenged Roberts for the championship.

The billiard world was aghast at the temerity and audacity of Cook, and particularly because he was guilty of 'the atrocious crime of being a young man.' Moreover, it was discovered that there was no precedent for the conditions of championship matches, the challenger always having 'walked over' by default of the challengee. Meetings were held; a set of laws was drawn up, and the principal billiard-table makers presented a handsome trophy, to be held by the champion for the time being on certain conditions, one of which was that the trophy should become the absolute property of any one holding the title of champion for five years consecutively. A model was made of the pockets, which were reduced to three inches at the fall. This, no doubt, was intended to 'bar the spot,' and Cook had to be consulted. He was so confident of his own ability that he agreed to whatever

was proposed, or, as he forcibly put it, he didn't care—he could play on an adjective tea-tray.

The match, 1,200 up, on a championship table, under championship laws and conditions, for 100*l.* a side, was played in the large room at St. James's Hall on February 11, 1870. The hall was crammed from floor to ceiling. Looking down from above the galleries, it presented the appearance, not easily forgotten, of an inverted truncated pyramid of heads. After five hours' play Cook was declared the winner by 117 points. After becoming champion, Cook again repeatedly beat all records of exhibition matches. His best break is 1,362 (451 spots), and in a match for money he made 156 on a championship table (best on record).

The only professionals who had any chance against Cook were John Roberts, jun., and J. Bennett. As soon as Cook became champion, J. Roberts (son of the ex-champion) challenged, and handsomely avenged his father's defeat. Soon after, J. Bennett challenged J. Roberts, and defeated him, but only by 95 points. At this time J. Bennett was believed to be the best losing hazard player out. Though he has several times been champion, he has been, on the whole, an unlucky player. When it seemed possible that he might be able at no distant date to claim the 'trophy' as his own, he had the misfortune to break his arm, and was consequently obliged to resign the championship.

Of J. Roberts, the champion, as a billiard-player (that is, differentiating him from a spot-stroke player), it is impossible to speak too highly. Nearly all his matches are 'spot-barred,' *i.e.* after making one spot hazard he is compelled to return to all-round play. As an exponent of the all-round game he is without a rival. He has made a number of all-round breaks which beat previous records. It has long been the ambition of professional players to score five hundred off the balls, spot-barred. This feat J. Roberts achieved on April 12, 1886, his break, magnificently played throughout, totalling 506. During the whole of the past season (commencing October 1885, and ending when 'exhibitions' fail to draw, important matches being rarely played later than May) he has played a long match, 12,000 or 15,000 up, nearly every week, generally giving several thousand points start, and has only been beaten four or five times. He is an astonishingly quick player, his average being five or six hundred in an hour. Compare this with the rate of an ordinary amateur, who considers he is playing pretty well if he gets through two games of a hundred in an hour.

In consequence of J. Roberts's playing so much spot-barred he has not 'compiled,' as the reporters call it, any highly sensational break, spot-in, his best being a mere trifle of 722 (239 spots). W. Mitchell, 'the spot-stroke wonder,' has made 1,839 (612 spots), besides others of over a thousand; and W. J. Peall, champion spot-stroke player, who has made more 'tall' breaks than any one else, holds the record of the highest break, viz. 1,989 (548 spots).

It cannot be denied that some of the sensational breaks have been made on tables of the hat-like pocket character. The breaks mentioned are sufficiently remarkable even on easy tables; but no comparison of the powers of various players is possible unless they all play on tables with the same-sized pockets. A standard pocket is very much wanted, and it is to be regretted that the Billiard Association, when drawing up their laws last year, did not legislate with regard to a regulation pocket. And this leads us to remark on the singular condition of billiard legislation, as compared with that which obtains in respect of other games and sports which are patronised by gentlemen. Amateurs are so supine in the matter of billiard laws that they leave the conduct of affairs in the hands of professionals. There is no parallel to this action—or rather inaction—elsewhere. Bookmakers do not dictate the laws of racing; professional cricketers do not draw up the laws of cricket; watermen do not favour us with a code of boating laws. Why should professional billiard-players (who, without any disrespect to them, live by their amateur patrons) be empowered to 'compile and approve' the laws of billiards? Simply because amateurs are not sufficiently energetic to stir in the matter. The Association laws, too (issued in November 1885), are ridiculously bad. To obtain a code of laws which would be satisfactory to the billiard world in general, all that is necessary is for the Committees of the principal London billiard and play-clubs to appoint a billiard laws committee, to revise the laws of billiards, pool, and pyramids. A code issued under such auspices would necessarily be adopted by all clubs; and the professionals would have no alternative but to follow suit or to estrange their best friends. Until something of this kind is done the game of billiards must remain in the anomalous position of a gentleman's game ruled by the players. And until it is done billiards cannot properly rank, as it should do, as the best of indoor ball games.

MISS CALLOGG OF CALLOGG.

'HERE we are, Tabitha,' says my father, letting down his window and looking out.

I look out, too, to see on my side a glimmering breadth of surf stealing up to the unfenced roadway; on his, a wretched lean-to tumble-down village that seems to be crouching against the cliffs to escape the streaming rain. 'It is only two miles on to Callogg,' I say with a shiver. 'Need we stay here, father?'

'Yes, my dear,' he answers absently, scarcely heeding me in the eagerness with which he looks up and down. 'There is a steep hill before us—a stiff pull, Tabitha. I remember we never drove this way without stopping.'

My sight is becoming used to the dim light, and I eye the cottage at which we have stopped—hovel I call it in my mind—with distaste. 'Is there not a better inn over there—there—don't you see, father?' I suggest rather peevishly.

'This was always our inn, my dear.' And with the—to him sufficient—answer he steps into the rain. 'Will you sit in the carriage, or come in and warm your feet?'

I am cross and cold. The first feeling bids me stay and suffer the second. But the inn door opens, letting out a sudden promising burst of light and warmth, and I succumb. I follow him in, keeping close to him as a clamour of loud voices and a cloud of tobacco-smoke meet us. A low-roofed room, a huge fireplace, a wooden settle, a brisk little woman with a pewter measure in her hand, half a dozen rough figures rising in confusion—these are what I see. 'Don't move,' says my father quietly. 'We shall trouble you only for a minute or two. Will you give my driver a glass of something? I am afraid he is very wet.' He pauses, looks from one curious face to another, then adds slowly, 'Perhaps some one here may remember me. I am Mr. Walter Callogg.'

There is a pause, then a sudden outburst, and my face is flushing hotly, with no help from the fire. Everything is changed on the instant. I think the village delightfully primitive, and almost picturesque, the inn the cosiest resort of kindest fishermen. It does not need the respectful roughness, with which an old sailor pushes me into a chimney-seat from which a younger

man has just risen, to make me feel at home. Indeed, I take the man's seat with reluctance; not because he is very wet—steaming in the warmth of the fire—but because he is the only one who has not had a word of welcome for us, has sat longest after our entrance, eyed us most indifferently, and—well, in a word, done least to hail Miss Callogg of Callogg.

However, we do not stay long—only five minutes, during which I behave as prettily as I can to every one, finding it all delightful, and being quite sorry when we leave. They stand up as we pass out, and I am tripping towards the door, consciously beaming on every side, when an abrupt word spoils it all.

'Are you not leaving this?' cries a man's voice, its tone loud and ungracious. 'Is not this yours?'

Ugh! It is like the jar of a false note coming after the kindly broken English of the Welsh fishermen. My exit is spoiled. Unwittingly I have brought in my dressing-bag, and the wet young man whose seat I have been enjoying is standing coolly pointing to it. 'Oh yes,' I answer quietly, seeing that he does not offer to pick it up: 'will you be good enough to put it in the carriage?'

And I stand by—though for an instant I think he is not going to do it—until I have seen him take it up and carry it out. 'Are you ready?' says papa.

'Not quite,' I reply, and I hurriedly extract a shilling from my purse and give it to the man, then jump in, and we are off. I would not insult our Welshmen by offering them money so, for the world; but unwilling service should always be paid for.

'It is pleasant to be at home,' says my father presently, with a sigh that I know is meant for the past. 'Do you think you will like it, child?'

'Oh yes!' I answer with enthusiasm. 'The people are so kind and nice. Everyone is delightful—all our own people, I mean. I did not like that young man in the corner by the fire; but then I am sure he is not a Callogg man.'

'No,' assents papa. 'I think he must be a Yankee. He seemed an independent sort of fellow.'

And I feel sure in my own mind that he is a Yankee.

My first task next morning—and how I enjoyed it!—was to go over Callogg. I learned then why my father, away in Bergen, had thought so much of being a Callogg—tiny and nicely propor-

tioned to our twelve hundred acres as was our bit of Burke—why nothing had ever annoyed him more than to be asked if he were an Englishman, or to be told that his name was a strange one. Strange? Here in the little Welsh peninsula it was no strange one; and as for the place, it was lovely! The sea and the winds seemed parcel of it. Half a mansion, and half a farmhouse, with huge outbuildings and a dark wood, in which the trees all leaned one way, it clung to the hill-side so old and grey and weather-beaten and sad-seeming that one grew a hundred times more proud of it, and fell a hundred times more deeply in love with it, than if it had been a great rich demesne. There was such romance—in a quiet dreary minor key—about it, that only to be a part of such a place was much; to be its mistress seemed bliss indeed to me after a girlhood spent between an English school and a Norwegian banking-house. A worthy mistress of it I intended to be.

‘You won’t find it dull?’ said my father doubtfully. This was a few days later. I think he hardly dared to believe I took pleasure in the things that for him were tied up with his boyhood; and so were far other in his eyes than they would seem to a stranger.

‘Dull!’ I answered scornfully. ‘I shall never be dull here. I know half the village already.’

‘And the other half know you,’ he retorted, laughing with pleasure.

‘Of course they do,’ I answered, tossing my head. ‘I am going to the island to-day to see the old woman there. Fancy, father, she is eighty-three, and has just been to Carnarvon and back by sea! It is no wonder she is ill, is it? I shall catch Pritchard before he goes fishing, and make him row me over.’

‘You will take Mary?’

‘If you wish it, of course. But it is quite unnecessary. Who do you think would harm my Lady Callogg, you foolish man?’ And then, after he had said that he should bring the vicar, our only neighbour, to dinner, I set off with the maid.

We reached the cove, or rather came in sight of it, not a moment too soon. There was Evan Pritchard’s boat—a very pretty white one, which he had bought for an old song from a stranded steamer—just gliding out from the beach. I could see one man pushing her off with the boat-hook, and another getting up the sail. There was no time to be lost. ‘Be quick, Mary,’ I cried; ‘we have hit it nicely; run-on and call them, girl.’

She started, and I started too, and was down the sloping path as fast, or faster, waving my pocket-handkerchief as I ran, and thinking of anything rather than the becoming. It was annoying, though only because I did not like the man—or sobering perhaps would be the word—to find when we reached the beach that old Evan's companion was the Yankee. I could not help fancying, as I came near enough to see their faces, that he was eyeing me—I suppose we were a little hot and flurried—with a cool amusement that was quite out of place in a man of that class. Still I may have been mistaken. He touched his hat as civilly as the other; and I tried to set matters right by putting a shade more of authority into my tone as I said, 'Good-morning, Evan! How are you to-day? We want you to put us across to the island before you go fishing.'

'To the island, dear!' answered Evan, as if he had never heard of so singular a proposition before. 'Yes, indeed, miss.'

But instead of offering to carry me on board he scratched his head and looked first at the boat and then at his companion.

'It will not take you half an hour,' I said, rather offended at his hesitation, which I could not understand. Besides, there was a sort of absurd bathos in our standing there aimlessly after the fuss and haste we had made.

'And indeed, miss,' was his answer, 'it is not the time. It is the weather I am not altogether advised about, do you see?' And he looked out to sea, and then again at the younger man, who said something I could not hear.

Naturally I too looked out to sea. It was as calm as could be wished—just rippling under what I knew to be a good mackerel breeze, while there was scarcely a cloud in the sky.

'The weather? Nonsense, Evan!' I replied sharply. 'I suppose you are anxious to make the most of this wind for the mackerel.'

That touched him.

'No indeed, my lady,' he cried briskly, throwing in the painter and stepping towards me; 'you shall not think it is that. And I will be bound that the weather will be the better for your pretty face.'

I confess to a secret triumph as I took my seat. It would have been too stupid if, after our parade of stopping them, they had sailed away and left us standing upon the beach like mere excursionists. True, it annoyed me that the younger man should

shrug his shoulders as he followed us into the boat, either at Evan's decision or his compliment. But I contented myself with vowing never to employ him again; and catching Mary making eyes at him, as I thought, a minute later, I gave her a glance which put a stop to that. Poor girl! I suppose in her view he was an eligible young fellow. In fact, he did not look so rough to-day, in his monkey-jacket and duck trousers, as he had seemed at the inn, when muffled up in all kinds of wraps and dripping at every angle.

It was a beautiful day for sailing, and I enjoyed it demurely, Evan sitting between us women, and steering, and his friend attending to the jib-sheet forward. We had nearly gained the point opposite to the island when I saw signals passing between them; and first the little sail was taken in, and then the big one began to shiver and flap. I stooped to let the latter pass over me, but, as nothing happened, glanced up and found both the men looking steadily ahead.

'Are we not going to tack, Evan?' I said rather crossly. 'Evan,' as he did not answer, 'what is it?'

'Indeed, we are taking a look at that, miss,' he replied; and, following the direction of his finger, I made out a line of white running out from the point. It was a mere nothing—a thread of tiniest breakers. A schoolboy would have urged his canoe over it without a thought.

'Well,' I said lightly, 'you are surely not afraid of that.' For, seeing their attitudes, it had suddenly dawned upon me that I was to be disappointed at last, and that would be too provoking.

'There will be wind behind it,' observed the Yankee, speaking for the first time so that we could hear. 'We had better put the ladies ashore.'

'Evan,' I said, pointedly ignoring the other, while I felt my face flushing with annoyance, 'you don't think there will be any danger in crossing?'

'Well, indeed, miss, I don't know what to think,' replied the old man, looking thoughtfully into the bluish-grey distance. 'There are clouds rising yonder. It is the coming back I am thinking of.'

'You would not stop fishing for this?' I persisted.

'No, to be sure,' he allowed readily. 'But we can shift for ourselves, miss.'

'And Mary and I can shift for ourselves too,' I answered obstinately. 'Please let us go on.'

It seemed as if that would settle the matter, for Evan gave way, and rose to pass the yard over; and I was beginning to repent, if the truth must be told, and to wonder whether there could be any danger—certainly the clouds had grown a bit in the last few seconds—when Evan abruptly sat down again. I saw it all. He had caught the other's eye, and the latter, sitting still and smiling, had just shaken his head. It was too bad: No wonder that, though it was foolish of me, I grew angry. It looked as if this wretched American, or whatever he was, had set himself from the beginning to thwart us. I would not pretend that I had not seen.

'Will you be good enough to leave it in Evan's hands?' I said to him roundly. 'We know and can trust him.'

'I am sure,' he was beginning, 'that I——'

'Please do not answer me,' I replied, cutting him short with sufficient haughtiness. 'I wish to leave it to Evan.'

'Very well,' he persisted in answering, speaking with insufferable coolness, exactly as if we had been equals; 'I am certain that he will do nothing foolish.'

There was a covert warning in the words, and I could hardly check myself when Evan responded to it by saying:—

'Well, indeed then, miss, I think we had better not go.'

'Then that decides it,' I replied quickly, trying to swallow my chagrin. 'But I know,' I added to the younger man, with no concealment of my resentment so far as he was concerned, 'whom I have to thank for the disappointment. I am quite certain that no Callogg man would have either disoblged me—or been afraid of that.'

I know it was babyish and undignified. The next moment I could have bitten my tongue out. But the thing was said, and nothing was left but to sit in stately dudgeon until we reached the cove; which I did. What Mary and Evan thought of it I don't know. It sufficiently filled up my vexation to see that the cause of all this trouble had ceased to smile indeed, but, if I might believe my eyes, was daring to look shocked.

'It does seem rather threatening now, miss,' Mary said timidly as we turned in at the gate of Callogg.

'Hold your tongue!' I cried, not having forgotten how she had looked at him. Then I added hastily, as my better angel

prevailed, 'There, I am very sorry. I am afraid I am in a bad temper to-day, Mary.'

But the worst of it all was that my annoyance clung to me through the afternoon. The weather's threatening appearance soon justified itself. Within half an hour of our return it was blowing hard and raining violently. Every gust made me miserable; it put me so in the wrong, and in the wrong so late. I could do nothing but wander about the house, now hating myself for my folly, and now shuddering to think that the maid would tell it all to the kitchen-folk. It was a relief to hear from the servants—for papa had gone out again—that there would be a guest at dinner, and I was glad to dress and go down in good time, if it were only for the sake of diverting my thoughts.

I was alone in the drawing-room, doing some work by the light of the fire, when I heard the dogs bark. In a moment John opened the door, and, saying 'Mr. Smith,' ushered in, not the vicar, but a stranger. As I rose I could see little more of him by that light than that he wore the regulation evening suit and had a short fair beard.

'My father will be down in a minute,' I said suavely, making my bow in my best-company manner. 'Has it not been a dreadful afternoon?'

He assented, and said something in his turn, while I was busying myself with wondering where my father had met him and who he was; above all, what Mr. Smith—that was not a strange name—might be thinking of Miss Callogg of Callogg.

By-and-by he said suddenly: 'I am afraid that you were disappointed in your sail to-day.'

I looked up, startled not so much by his words, though they were unpleasant enough, as by his tone, which seemed oddly familiar. I peered at him before I answered, but I could only see that his eyes were fixed upon me.

'A little,' I answered guardedly. 'I had intended going to the island. Did you see our boat out?'

'Yes,' he replied with something like a laugh; and just then the candles were brought in.

'I am sure,' I began, looking at him by their light, and struggling with a sense of confusion in bearing and memory alike, 'that I have met you before, Mr.—Mr. Smith.'

'Twice before,' he answered quickly, with a laugh—unmistakable this time—and a bow; 'only we were not on the same

level on those occasions. Now perhaps I may be allowed to make my defence, Miss Callogg. Nay,' he cried hastily, a sudden gravity falling upon him as I rose and stepped back, some of the horror and shame that were filling my soul showing itself, I suppose, in my burning face, for I saw it all now—'nay, but first I must apologise to you for the trick which my rough clothes and oilskins naturally—very naturally—played upon you.'

'Oh, what can I say to you?' I cried.

'You need say nothing, I am sure,' he answered in a low voice after a moment's silence. 'You distress me—indeed you do, Miss Callogg. I had looked upon it as the merest joke.'

'A joke!' I exclaimed, writhing afresh at the thought.

'Then it shall not be a joke,' he said hastily, a real kindness showing itself in his almost comic earnestness; and before he could say more papa was in the room, and I, murmuring something about being back in a moment, fled upstairs, and shut myself in to think what I was to do. I had given him a shilling and called him a coward—and now I was to dine with him! What was there I could do?

Before I could make up my mind to anything, except that I was the most wretched girl in the world, the bell rang for me or for dinner, and I was forced to go down, and go in on his arm. He was wonderfully thoughtful—I had to confess that. He talked fast and pleasantly to papa of Norway and Bergen, which he seemed to know, and of London and what was going on there, while my face had time to cool. I learned that the vicar had introduced him to my father. By-and-by he reminded the latter of his presence in the inn on the evening of our arrival.

'And you or your daughter—I think it was Miss Callogg—gave me a shilling,' he added lightly. 'The least I can do,' and he turned to me for almost the first time, 'as I earned the money under false pretences, is to return it.'

Then he gave me a shilling, and I repaid him with a grateful look. He could have done nothing, I thought, more full of tact, nothing more courteous. I began to hope that after many years, when my hair should be grey, I might come to think it a joke. And indeed it was fully a month before I could see anything funny in it; an autumn month of long pleasant days, during which he was a good deal with us, now shooting with my father, and now making expeditions to this or that place on the coast. Then I had to show him Callogg—I maintained that he had no

right to any prior acquaintance with it—and so showing it, grew to love the dear old place more and more.

‘I cannot think,’ I said one day about the end of this time, ‘how I could take you for what I did.’

‘Cannot you?’ he answered; a dry, unsatisfactory answer, and given in a tone which seemed to imply that he could.

‘No,’ I said pretty humbly. I thought he would explain. He did not; he left it there. Only, after a while, he remarked:—

‘You are very fond of Callogg—of living at Callogg, I mean?’

‘Oh yes,’ I said stoutly, but not without some fear that he meant more than appeared. ‘I would not live anywhere else for the world. There is no place and no life I should prefer to this.’

‘To being Callogg’s My Lady Bountiful?’

‘If you please to put it so, though I consider the remark an ill-natured one.’

‘And yet,’ he said, somewhat thoughtfully, passing by my attack as unworthy of notice, ‘I think there may be other lives as well worth living. No doubt this is placid and beautiful enough——’

‘Nothing could be more beautiful,’ I put in indignantly. We were coming down the hill at the back of the house. The sea at our feet was a golden pathway leading to the sunset; while the land seemed full of the lowing of cows at milking-time, and the far-off cawing of returning rooks.

He laughed at my enthusiasm. ‘Granted, Miss Callogg,’ he replied, ‘and I will allow too that life in the midst of this is beautiful also; but is that all life should be? Yes; I am straying into philosophy, I know; but I can make you understand what I mean in a word, by saying that I have a greater respect for your father in that he has fought his way in the world, than if he had lived at Callogg from his boyhood. You know a vegetable is not the highest exposition of life?’ he added.

‘And so we are vegetables!’ I said with pathos; and then added, seriously, ‘But women cannot well fight their way in the world, Mr. Smith.’

‘Not directly, but indirectly they can,’ he answered; and he added something which I did not understand. I know now that it was a Latin proverb—‘*Qui facit per alium facit per se*’; but I am thankful that I was not so wise then. ‘Do you know,’ he added hurriedly, ‘that it is my birthday to-day?’

I murmured my good wishes, but, for some reason or other, I did not find the words come easily.

‘Will you give me a present?’ he went on gaily. ‘There is one thing I should very much value as a keepsake, were it only to remind me how like a real seaman I can look upon occasion.’

‘What is that?’ I found the pathway rough, the need of picking my way very urgent just then.

‘The shilling you once gave me, and I so nobly returned to you,’ he answered. ‘I feel sure you have kept it by way of a penance. We know one another better now. Will you give it to me?’

I don’t know really whether I said I would or would not, and I don’t think he knew. But that evening—he happened to be dining with us—I did give it to him; putting it by his plate as I passed to my place at table.

The next day we—my father and I—went from home on a visit of two days. I was a little late in packing, and when I came down found papa already seated in the carriage. ‘What have you been doing—in the hall, I mean—Tabitha?’ he asked, rather sharply for him; and looking at me strangely.

‘Only telling Mary that Mr. Smith would call for the books on the table. He borrowed them yesterday,’ I explained.

‘Mr. Smith! Mr. Smith!’ he answered, with more vexation in his face than I could remember seeing. ‘Who is Mr. Smith, do you think? Who is he? What is he? I wish I knew, my girl! There, there, there, child, don’t be frightened.’

I was not frightened; but after wondering a little at his sudden irritability, I began to wonder, too, why Mr. Smith had never told us what he was. I did not know any more than papa. Something had led me to think he was a surgeon, possibly an army surgeon. Only I was sure of one thing—that he was a gentleman, and one who had work to do and was doing it.

When we returned we found the books still on the hall table, and learned that Mr. Smith had been called away at a moment’s notice.

That evening I found Callogg dull for the first time—so dull that, going slowly upstairs to bed, I began to think I knew why my father had been moved to his strange outburst on the day we left.

I hardly know why it was that when we went to London

before Christmas the town wore a new aspect for me, that I seemed as if I could look at its stir and movement only from one point of view. I knew the park and streets and squares—as dead things—for I had been at school in one of the suburbs; and if all my thought now had been to get as much enjoyment as possible out of my peep into the society that lived about them, then there would have been nothing astonishing in that. But my interest was wayward; it would centre itself in the crowd I met in the streets, which I pictured to myself—foolishly, I suppose—as made up of men all playing, or rather working, their part in the world, and some perhaps making history.

Not that I was free to do much dreaming. My father seemed to have many friends—Carnarvonshire grandees and business connections and salmon-fishers whom he had entertained in Norway, who were all quick in finding us out; so that, though it was not the season, our rooms at the hotel were seldom empty at tea-time or tenanted later in the evening.

‘I am going to see Sir Charles Wigram this morning, child,’ my father announced one day at breakfast. ‘I cannot take you. What will you do with yourself?’

‘Oh, I shall do famously,’ I answered. ‘I shall wrap up warmly and have a quiet walk by myself right down Bond Street and back again. That will take me until luncheon time, I dare say.’

‘Good heavens!’ cried my father rudely, ‘a walk down Bond Street and back again take three hours! Well, I don’t mind so long as you take Mary, and keep on the right side of the shop windows.’

So I started a little after ten, and had his last command pretty faithfully in mind, with a certain latitude due to Christmas, until I reached—Savory and Moore’s I think it was; at any rate, it was a large chemist’s. Then it came into my head that my father had said that we wanted a medicine-chest at Callogg. One had always been kept there in the old time for the use of the village, the nearest doctor living six miles away. ‘We must get a price-list of such things, Tabitha,’ he had remarked, and I had meant to leave it to him. But, now I was on the spot, it seemed such an excellent chance that I was loth to pass on. He hated shopping, moreover. So, leaving Mary at the door, I went in.

It was a large shop, very grand, and full of people at the time. I had to stand aside a little, waiting my turn to be served, and it

was only gradually that I was able to reach the counter. I was looking about me pleasantly enough, for my time was my own, when something, or rather some one, fixed my attention, and in a moment I had forgotten everything else. My eye had fallen upon one of the assistants who had just come in through a door at the back with a paper in his hand. I watched him. I seemed to be fascinated by him, by something familiar in the turn of his head, his laugh, his way of speaking to one and another of his fellows as he made his way with his list towards my end of the shop. I tried to avert my eyes in a kind of terror, but it was of no use. I was forced to look more anxiously, more desperately, as each second passed. Each step brought him nearer, until, coming up slowly, he stood before me. I could doubt no longer. It was no mistake. The black apron, the over-sleeves, should have been disguise enough for one who had dined with us, talked with us, lived with us at Callogg; but they were not. I knew him certainly for Mr. Smith as, his eyes still bent on the paper, he said to me calmly, 'What can I get for you, if you please?'

I tried to speak, but could not, and, receiving no answer, he repeated more brusquely, 'What can I do for you?' and glanced up. Our eyes met. I saw the blood rush quickly to his cheeks—saw him start and falter as I looked him pitilessly in the face. Then I turned slowly away with a quiet bow. 'I—I will call again another day,' I murmured faintly, and somehow walked out of the shop with a mist before my eyes.

If any one had told me, earlier, that I was proud, I should have denied it, with anger perhaps. But the bitterness of that moment when I found myself standing in the street outside the shop convicted me once for all in my own eyes. It was not so much pain I felt as mortification and shame; resentment against him for what I considered his deception, mingled with a petty fear, all the more painful because I was sensible of its pettiness, lest Mary should have seen and recognised him. This was the man to whom I had given—ah! what had I not given? I looked at the crowd in the street with other eyes now, hot smarting eyes, chiding myself for the folly which had put upon his words 'fighting one's way in the world' only the most romantic meaning. Could it have been, I wondered, angry at the very thought, that even then he had been trying to break the knowledge of his position, his situation, to me—striving to prepare me for it?

'I am afraid that London does not agree with you, Tabitha?'

said papa at luncheon. 'I must be thinking of taking you back to Callogg.'

Callogg! Heaven forgive me, I felt at that moment as if I could never bear to see it again. I would have given much to be able to lay my head on the table and cry my heart out. But upstairs I had made up my mind that if I would be proud in one way I must be as proud in another. And I managed to smile and say that I was tired: which was true enough.

'Too tired to go to Lady Wigram's this evening?' answered my father. 'She gave me a card, and I was to be sure and bring you. She had not known before that you were in town.'

'I should like it of all things,' I answered feverishly. Anything to get away from myself. 'Is it to be a large party, do you know?' I asked with interest, or what passed for interest.

'I believe so. I think it will be worth your while to go, if it be only to see the people. Wigram knows every one, and there are all sorts of queer folk to be met at his house, I am told.'

'I would not miss it for anything,' I cried, thinking to myself that, however queer the people to be met there, I knew of one upon our small visiting-list whom we need have little fear of seeing.

The house was in Sussex Square, north of the park. As I followed papa up the stairs, talking to an acquaintance whom we had been so lucky as to meet upon the steps, I felt recklessly gay. I was prepared for all things, and so was disappointed at finding that there was no crush. The staircase was clear. We reached the hostess without difficulty. I saw no one queer. Lady Wigram said something pleasant to me upon my introduction, and of course I smiled, even while I shuddered lest her motherly eyes should penetrate my mask. Then I gave place to some one else, and the first face I saw, the first eyes that looked into mine as I turned, were *his*.

Yes; he had evidently been watching me, gazing at me past the person with whom he was talking—a short but martial-looking man. My first impulse—I was trembling in every limb—was to drop my eyes, abashed and ashamed, as well as thunderstruck. But my pride helped me. It flashed across my mind that he could have no right there; and though I felt the blood mounting hot to my temples, I kept my eyes for an instant defiantly fixed in his direction. Then I said, so loud that he might hear if he chose:—

'Will you take me into the other room, papa? I feel it rather hot here.'

I longed for time to think about it and puzzle over it. But I had hardly found a seat before the short man I have mentioned followed us into the room, and at once singled out my father.

'This is my daughter, Sir Charles,' said papa. 'Tabitha, Sir Charles Wigram.'

'It is very good of you to come, Miss Callogg, at so short notice,' said Sir Charles very nicely. 'I shall give you a longer one when I come to Callogg. Oh! I am coming. I have heard that the place is charming—first-rate!'

Twenty-four hours before the compliment would have pleased me beyond measure. Now it was with an effort I said:—

'I hope you may not be disappointed. You will find it rather small, and not at all grand. I shall answer, for my part, only for your welcome. But pray tell me,' I asked thoughtlessly, 'who has been praising Callogg to you? Not papa, surely?—though I do believe he is quite capable of it.'

'No, no. I will tell you who it was, and you can call him to account. It was Dr. Ringwood Smith.'

'Dr. Ringwood Smith?' I repeated mechanically.

'Yes. He tells me that he has been spending a great part of the autumn recruiting himself near your place. Eh?' a spasm of doubt shooting across his face—I suppose at the sight of my bewilderment, 'is it not so? Yes'—reassured by a second thought—'it was he, of course. I understood him to say that he knew you well. The Egyptian-cholera man, I mean. You remember? Sent out by the Government; four hospitals on his hands at once—madhouse—Order of Medjidié—all about it in the papers. One of the Devonshire Ringwood Smiths, you know. And, by gad!' cried the old general, warming up to an improper pitch of enthusiasm, 'one of the best and pluckiest men I know!'

'Have you heard,' I said faintly—I felt I must ask the question—'what he is doing in Bond Street, Sir Charles—at Savory and Moore's, I think it is?'

'Ah, he did tell me something about that. Serving his apprenticeship to the drug-mixing, I fancy. Bless my heart! he is a man never satisfied until he has got hold of a thing by every one of its corners. But now, Miss Callogg, have you seen the Gordon Medal?'

'The Medjidié?' I murmured.

'No, no; the Devonshire Gordon Medal. It is in the little room at the end. I will take you there.'

I let him do so—what did anything at all matter now?—and we had the room to ourselves. But when, after bending long over the little silver disc and seeing nothing of it, I looked up, he was gone, and Dr. Ringwood Smith was in his place. I recoiled as he held out his hand.

'Won't you shake hands with me?' he said, smiling on me in the old frank, assured manner.

'No,' I said, fiercely thrusting my hands down by my sides, 'I will not!'

'Why not, Miss Callogg? What have I done?'

'Nothing, and I everything,' I cried. I felt thankful for, almost jubilant in, my strength. 'Twice to-day I would not know you. I will not be so mean as to know you now. Please let me go. You understand me, I am sure?'

'I think I do,' he answered coolly. 'I remember, too, that very nearly the same thing happened to us once before.'

'Do you hear me ask you to go?' I cried desperately. I felt that my strength was ebbing away under his eyes. 'Cannot you understand that this room is not large enough for us two after what has happened? You are torturing me!'

'Well, it is a small room,' he said; and I—I laughed hysterically. I could not help it. 'That is better,' he said. 'Now please to sit down.'

Again I could not help it. I did as I was bidden.

'I remember, that last time,' he went on, standing over me, and I knew, though I dared not look up, gazing down at me, 'I made it all right by giving you a shilling. This time, Miss Callogg, the case is more serious, and you must do the giving. Tabitha, you know what I want. Will you give it to me? Will you give me yourself?'

'I am not worth giving,' I whispered.

'Just so,' he answered; 'therefore hardly worth, on your part, keeping. A little thing,' he murmured softly, and I felt his hand just touch my hair, 'but my own.'

*AT THE OYBIN.*

IN spite of the fact that in the opinion of a local chronicler 'the literature of the Oybin is the richest possessed by any European mountain, save and except Vesuvius,' scarcely a word has been written upon this strange, romantic, and weird spot by any English writers.

It is, like the fortresses of Bösig and Bergstein, still unknown ground to the ordinary traveller; and its wondrous ruins, perched high in air, amidst the wild, fantastic rocks, rarely echo to the sound of an English tongue. The life led upon this pillared, forest height has strangely alternated between horrid deeds of devilry and religion. Robber knight and monk have in turns held possession of this stronghold; but now its ruins rise in picturesque strength, half hid by the solemn pines, and shelter but the historian, or archæologist, or pleasure-loving traveller.

The approach to the Oybin from the main road leading out of Zittau forms a pleasant drive through villages that have prosperity stamped upon every lineament. The little groups of well-dressed, well-shod children tramp in lines of two-and-two to school, the boys leading the way, and the girls following with woollen headdresses of every hue, their faces bright and ruddy, and their knapsacks at their backs. The houses are well built and picturesque, with dark timber beams, and nestle amid flowering fruit trees and graceful waving birches upon slopes of rich pasture.

Factories of silk and cloth, and oil mills, dot here and there the landscape, and prove the fact that factory life need not be passed amid hideous surroundings; the great lines of flax spread out on the green fields seem also to add life and change to the scene.

As we neared the Oybin we saw on our left the tower of Töpfer, then we passed a charming mill with a little lake; and soon after the road slowly ascended through a quiet forest. On our left was a great block of rock piled up to a thousand feet; below us was a little group of houses with peasants working in their bright colours in an intensely green meadow, and ere long came in view the strange mass of the Oybin.

As we wound round this extraordinary pile of nature's handiwork, we saw how regularly were formed the giant steps which built up the mountain. The scene was very enchanting: we were driving in a deep gorge, with on either hand these giant stairways towering above us. The grey rocks, with rich, dark brown moss and bright yellow lichen, peeped between the great ruddy trunks of mighty pines, and far up above their dark tops was the deep blue of a cloudless sky.

The mass upon which were perched the ruins of the Oybin may best be described as a giant beehive, so regularly do the rocks form themselves into a slightly pointed dome. To the height of about 1,500 feet they rise, and the Töpfer, the Brandstein, and the other neighbour heights vary from 1,500 to about 2,300 feet, each mountain unique and peculiar in its formation.

The nature of the rock, of soft yielding sandstone, lends itself to the formation of curious peaks and heights, that look as though worked by man into colossal figures of birds, of animals, and of men; some of the figures being very correct, others grotesque in their modelling.

We left our carriage at the foot of the rocky dome, and commenced our ascent, sheltered from the sun by the pines. Up past the last cottages of the village, and the little bell-turret of the tiny modern church; on amongst the waterworn rocks and the sheltering pines, to the first block of masonry that guarded the ascent to the fortress.

A very solid piece of work this gateway had been, with a rudely rounded semi-pointed arch; but we delayed not here, but climbed still on to the little plateau above.

We passed the ruins of the 'Kaiserhaus,' leaving this to look at as we descended, and entered at once the beautiful little chapel.

On our right hand, to the height of some sixty feet, the wall was of the living rock, one great block hewn flat, and from this sprang the well-formed arches of the choir; on the left-hand side, was only built masonry. Most picturesque and strange was the sight; above these walls of rock rose a delicate structure of charming architecture; lofty lancet windows, with the narrow pointed Early English arch, but with delicate mouldings of the Decorated order; much of the tracery still left, enabling the mind to fill in all details.

. In the little sacristy was a piscina worked from the rock, and a little side altar and holy-water stoup. This was the oratory of

the Emperor Charles IV., who commanded the building of the Kaiserhaus, but after his death, in 1378, it was used as a sacristy.

From the sacristy we went round into the cloisters, and were struck with the strange beauty of the scene, and the unique blending of rock and ruin open to the blue heaven, that was half veiled by the dark branches of the firs.

We stood at the western end of a low line of solid, grand, massive arches, rude and stern in their workmanship; but above them was the worked arch of the chapel, and the slighter triple windows of the sacristy, and beyond the interlaced trees and the soft spring sky. Above us on our right towered the high walls of the church, but below us, on our left, far down to many hundreds of feet, sank the walls of rock, down into the silent, rocky, fir-clad valley.

The beauty of the architecture in this wild and remote situation struck us forcibly, as we did not, whilst looking at it, know that the architect of the Prague cathedral had designed this mountain church, and had so welded nature's handiwork with his own. In the year 1366 it was commenced, and in 1384 consecrated by the Archbishop of Prague, when for a time the Oybin had settled down into calm religion under imperial rule.

But we did not delay long to think over the history of this strange spot; our man who had taken charge of us led us on out of the cloisters and sacristy, through a passage cut in the rock. Looking back from one spot was a lovely peep of harmonious mixture of rock and masonry, one great buttress standing up on a moss-covered rock, where formerly a bridge had been thrown across, with a fearful peep down into the deep gorge beneath.

But our attention was quickly drawn from this to perhaps one of the strangest little graveyards it would be possible to imagine: a little plateau perched on the top of a precipice; one side sheltered from the tempest by strangely worked masses of rock, that overhung and formed a canopy to some of the principal tombs. Some of the stones were curious and interesting; one, a knight in plate armour and with rounded helm, dated from 1550. It was the monument to the brother of the governor of the castle at that date.

From here one could look back at the church as a whole, at one glance take in the cloisters with their rude rounded or pointed arches, above these the pointed, more highly finished windows of the sacristy and the chapels, and again above these

the yet more sharply pointed windows of the church. The buttresses stood amidst the mighty trunks of the forest trees, that formed an outer nave and aisle to this inner choir. The birds were singing in the trees, and the wind was gently sighing amidst the pine tops, that here allowed some sunlight to break through upon the brilliant sulphur-toned lichen that lit up the masses of rock.

Near the little graveyard, to which the inhabitants below still bring up their dead, and still cling to with a superstitious love, a giant fir had taken to itself a strange foothold. It was perched, or clinging to two isolated pillars of rock, its roots spreading over the two, but with a good space between them; and near this freak of nature was the sombre pool that supplied the castle with water; it lay in a recess beneath the giant rocks, some of the winter's snow still lingering in the dark cavities. Fourteen feet deep it was, said our guide; and beneath it, below the flat surface that forms its bottom, is the entrance to the great vault where still lies the treasure of the castle.

'Has it never been opened?' we asked.

'It is only possible on one night in the year, and at midnight,' was the solemn reply.

'How then can this treasure be obtained?'

'Only on the Day of All Souls at midnight, at 12 o'clock, is it possible to gain an entrance to that vault; then the whole of the water from this cistern disappears, and at the bottom of it is seen a large flat stone, upon which is carved the sign of the holy cross, and beneath this lies the entrance to the vault, where the Knight of the Oybin buried his untold treasures when Kaiser Carl took the castle.'

'But surely some one has tried to open it,' we exclaimed, as we leant back by the side of the dark cistern.

'Yes, once,' he said, and we listened whilst our guide solemnly told us the story of the treasure.

'Many, many years ago, six men of Oybin determined to try and get this treasure; they had amongst them a certain stalwart fellow called Brockelt, who was noted for his daring, and who always wore a red cap. These six, with Brockelt as their leader, armed themselves with crowbars and pickaxes, and with the stern determination and agreement that not a word was to be spoken amongst them; for, was it but one word, and they knew that immediately the water would return to the cistern.

'Up the mountain they climbed; it was a black stormy night, but as they came here to the side of the cistern, they heard the sound

of the midnight hour creep up from the valley far beneath, and they saw the water before them slowly and unaccountably vanish. Below was the great stone with the cross upon it, and over they sprang, and to work they went, with quick haste to raise it. Their blows re-echoed against the hollow sides of the cistern, and came back from the rocks above them; but without speech they worked on. The stone was beginning to move, when they looked up, and all around the sides of the cistern they saw a strange crowd of fiends and ghosts, with horns and tails and fleshless limbs. A gallows was being erected in their midst, and the sweat poured off the six workers, but yet in silence they still worked on, Brockelt at his fiercest; so near to the treasure, the stone was moving, their bars were beneath it, when an awful, hollow voice above them sounded down amongst them.

“Which of these gold vultures shall we hang first?”

‘The six workers looked up, and standing near the now-finished gallows was an awful figure, who said in slow, deep tones:—

“He with the red cap.”

‘Brockelt’s bravery could hold out no longer; he sank down upon his knees, and cried out:—

“Oh, have mercy upon me!”

‘But as this spoken word but escaped from his lips, an awful crash was heard; gallows and devils disappeared; the water rushed into the cistern, and only with desperate haste could the six save themselves from being drowned. Down the mountain as madmen they rushed, and said not one word of the awful sight they had seen; but, days after, Brockelt could no longer hold his tongue, and so the Oybiners learnt how they had failed to find the treasure.’

A strange but picturesque legend, we thought, and one not unlikely to be handed down to many generations of Oybin children, to fill their minds with superstitious dread of these ruined walls, and this calm, peaceful resting-place of the dead.

But we were yet to see much of these ruins, so we lingered no longer near the treasure cistern, but climbed up some steep steps near the eastern end of the church, and entered the veritable robber fortress that dominated the ecclesiastical buildings, and was but succeeded by them in calmer days.

Not much now is left of them. The Hunger Tower is pointed out, that inseparable adjunct to all early Bohemian castles. The towers of this earlier fortress were built of great solid blocks, in

a rude style. In early days the only entrance to these towers was by a ladder, which was pulled up at the first sign of danger, making the retreat an inaccessible and impregnable spot. One of the towers is square; traces of the walls can be followed, and slight remnants of the ramparts are still remaining. A worked-out oval in the rock, tradition says, was once the sacrificial altar in prehistoric days, and as heathen worship clung to Bohemia about 999, and in the neighbouring lands even to the fifteenth century, tradition has not had so long to sustain the story as in other lands.

From this height a capital view is obtained of the church beneath. One stands immediately over the eastern windows, and the manner in which the architect has turned the rock to his purpose can be well traced. The solid rock has been hewn level for the space required, leaving the great buttresses of living rock standing; and also the main southern wall, as noted in the interior; round this, on the exterior, a pathway has been worked, and a passage above, at the height of the windows, all worked in the solid rock upon which the delicate pointed arches of the windows are built with their artistic tracery. So well are the mouldings of these windows formed that one of them acts as a speaking-tube, and words spoken into the moulding upon one side in a whisper are distinctly audible to a listener who places his ear at the moulding upon the opposite side.

We had still, however, to clamber higher upon this historic berg, and get yet further back in its history; for at the top of all, amidst the trees whose branches sighed and moaned unsheltered in the free heavens, we found the traces of perhaps the first attempt to make this height the mighty stronghold it had since become. An embankment, or earthwork, could be traced all round the height, and near it a strange but awful trace of the past days, when this now silent mountain was the home and stronghold of savage warrior or robber knight. Hewn deep into the rock, yet unfinished, and still awaiting, during the centuries, its occupant, was a narrow, open grave. Much time and labour must have been spent upon it. For whom had it been commenced? Tradition has no word even upon it, but it would require little imagination to build up a legend upon this ever-waiting, yawning, unsatisfied tomb.

Yet still higher we climbed even from this open plateau, up rough steps hewn in the rock, to a spot called Prince Friedrich's Place, where a seat allows a rest, and from whence a glorious view

is had. Just beneath is a little hut, where, in midsummer, a camera obscura may be visited, and a little pathway leads to a rocky seat, known as the *Kaisersitz*, after Charles IV.'s stay here. But yet a little higher can we go, up some wooden steps, and on a rounded rock at last be on the summit of Oybin. On this exalted spot was formerly a little chapel, where the monks and pilgrims came and prayed; now the ruins of a summer-house stand upon its foundations.

The immense view from here is majestic and curious. The near fantastic heights, and weatherworn isolated peaks; the stretching plains, specked with villages or distant towns, or blackened with dark tracts of forest land, formed a scene of great beauty that we might well have lingered over. But the day was advancing, and we had yet more to see of the later days of the Oybin fortress; so we again descended from these earlier heights, and came down past the little God's acre, out on to a great level platform, where stood a modern, Swiss-like chalet.

This is the restaurant of the mountain, and few pleasanter days could be had than to arrive here early, and spend the day amidst the ruins of church, and castle, and stronghold; taking a midday lunch on this open platform, or an evening dinner with some plaintive German part-songs as a pleasant accompaniment before quitting the height that still speaks so forcibly of the past.

At one end of the platform is a lovely peep down into the narrow gorge below, shut in by the winding rocks and fir steepes on either hand. In the bottom lie tiny soft green meadows, with a few picturesque little houses, and beyond the narrow gorge opens up the great plain with Zittau in its midst, and the country that stretches away towards Görlitz.

The isolated tops of Töpfer claim special attention, and all the peaks around have their distinctive names. One disfiguring feature on this spot jars terribly with the impressiveness of the scene. The pillared rocks above the platform have been smoothed and flattened, and formed into placards, with great, ugly, staring letters that announce the fact that certain kings and princes have visited this height. An ugly, debasing sight are these sycophantic placards, and good taste should suggest their removal, that they may no longer disfigure one of the loveliest and most romantic spots in Europe. Let the announcements be consigned to their proper place—the 'extra' visitors' book, which is kept here for 'extra' visitors.

From this platform we descended past the chapel, down to the Kaiserhaus. But little now is left of this, and its interest pales before the chapel and the robber-height. But we looked out of the windows of the dining-hall down into the depths beneath, where silently lay the little fish-lake, surrounded with the pines and great lichen-covered rocks. Some of the windows here were square-headed, and the work was well finished. It was built by the town of Zittau, at the command of Charles IV., and he stayed here in the year 1369. But we were again drawn back to take one more glimpse of the chapel, and to penetrate into the vaults beneath it.

An intense chill struck us as we entered the vaults, that are very spacious and wholly dark. By the aid of a light we saw where an altar had been at the eastern end, and a trace was left of a holy-water fount. Near here was a narrow, low passage, into what we were told was the dead vault, but we went not in. On the walls are traces of engraved arms and rude crosses, but we had no good light, and so could not properly examine them; and we were glad to come out again into the soft tepid spring air, that sent a warm thrill over us after those icy depths.

Once more we descended to the Kaiserhaus, past the bust erected to Dr. Pescheck, the historian of the district, and clambered up the round tower that still remains of the work of one who was lord of this fortress before the cloister days. This is a part of the earliest authenticated masonry on the mountain, having been built by Henry of Leipa in 1316. This Henry was the Warwick of Bohemia, and also the Rothschild, for he not only set up kings or put them down as it seemed best to him, but he financed the government of the kingdom. Fourteenth-century history of Bohemia is full of the deeds of Henry of Leipa, then Lord of Oybin. But he passed but little of his time here. He was too much occupied in mighty state affairs to rest long in this mountain fastness.

The history of this powerful lord, from the year 1304 until his death in 1329, marks him as the bold hero and ready statesman, who time after time knew how to win for himself the highest influence in the land, and also how to maintain it.

'Fistright' held its own in those days, and the people were ready, though sometimes not at first willing, to follow in the train and aid to enlarge the rule of those knights who held these strongholds. But Henry of Lipa, as Palacky writes it, did not

confine himself to being a mere robber lord. Kingdoms were his booty, and in one year (1309) we read of his building a strong fortress at one end of the bridge at Prague, with high towers, beleaguering his king, Henry, and making him a prisoner in his own capital.

The king was allowed to go in and out of his castle, but in the meantime our Lord of Oybin was arranging a little matter of his own—viz. the betrothal of the Princess Elizabeth with Count John of Luxembourg, and he at length wholly deposed King Henry, and set up the king who was to be famed in history as King John of Bohemia—that king who, long years after, though he had become blind, fought and died at Crecy, and gave to our Prince of Wales the motto of ‘Ich dien.’

After the storming and taking of Prague from King Henry, Palacky relates ‘that a few days after, King John, with the Archbishop of Mayence, the Count of Henneberg, Henry of Lipa, and others, sat in judgment on the open place before the house of Simon Stuk in Prag, and declared all the acts of King Henry null and void.’

It was after this, in the year 1312, that he rebuilt the castle of Oybin, and manned it with a strong force; but leaving it in charge of two governors, whilst he occupied himself in the raging politics, intrigues, and fratricidal wars of the time. Soon he was at war with the king he had set up, and was at length made a prisoner; an act which caused a terrible general war to follow, for the power of Henry of Leipz and of Oybin was great. During his imprisonment his governors used the opportunity to indulge in ‘Fistright,’ and ravaged the country far and near. Feud followed feud, the queen’s party against the king’s party, or the home party against the foreign party, and Henry of Leipz threw himself into the arms of Austria for help against his own king: all the land was wasted and in utter misery, until the whole people of Bohemia and Moravia were against their king.

So terrible was the struggle, and so awful the distress, that in the Sedleyer church alone no less than 30,000 corpses were buried, and throughout the land people were buried in heaps and not in graves as before; and in some districts the country people became as savages, went forth in bands, and stole men and women and ate them.

In 1364 the town of Zittau was commanded to build the Kaiserhaus, whose ruins still rear themselves amidst the silent

pinces. But Carl (son of John of Crecy, now become Kaiser Carl IV.) had learned to love these strange weird heights, and had vowed to make Oybin a holy place; and when at Avignon, in 1365, he met with the Celestiner monks, to them he gave the right to establish themselves in this mountain, and to build the little church, that yet retains so much of its beauty, though its vaults are used as potato stores, and its walls re-echo but to the traveller's voice, save when some slow procession of the dead winds slowly up the height to lay its mournful burden above the pines.

The Emperor personally superintended these buildings, until in 1384 they were finished; some thirty-six years after to be stormed by the Hussites, but not to be carried.

The 'Six Towns' now came to its rescue and manned the fortress, and defeated the attack. Again, in 1429, once more the Hussites made a desperate assault upon its precipitous, rock-crowned peaks, but again unsuccessfully. Oybin was unconquered by the fierce followers of Huss, but the Reformation did the work that its terrible forerunners failed in; the monks left the cloisters, and, in 1568, the last prior of Oybin died in Zittau; and, to complete its ruin, in March 1577 a lightning flash lit up a flame that for eight days illuminated the mountain peaks around, set fire to the powder magazine, and laid the whole building in ruin.

The castle and its dependencies had already become the property of the town of Zittau, that still owns the lordship of Oybin, and the forests around, making a good income out of its timber and produce. Other misfortunes followed even the terrible destruction of 1577. In 1681 a great fall of rock added to its ruin, yet another fire burst out in 1707, and once more, in 1803, the rocks themselves worked mischief to the now desolate ruin.

Yet nature, and the relics of past art, still give to the beholder a sight of entrancing beauty. The walls and rocks still silently speak, though but in hushed whispers, of all the tumultuous life, the fierce love, and raging passions that have surged and died amidst these wilds; of the solace of religion and of the horrors done in religion's name. Full of romance, of legend, of history, of idyl, are the whisperings that these strange ruins give forth; and as we descended the steep heights to walk through the forests towards Nonenklunzen, it seemed strange indeed that no English writer had yet made known in England the wonders of the Oybin.

NEW EYES FOR SCIENCE.

MILLIONS of years ago a creature existed which the astronomer can hardly regard without feelings akin to envy. The ichthyosaurus cannot be considered strictly beautiful, according to modern ideas. A gigantic lizard, with monstrous flappers, and a particularly objectionable 'smile' (to use Mr. Venus's expression), would compare unfavourably even with the most flatfooted of the *plat-pieds* of science, blandly explaining to an exhausted audience the peculiar advantages of quadri-dimensional space. But the ichthyosaurus had an eye which even a Herschel might envy. This eye (of course he had a pair, though they may have been to our ideas singular) was about a foot in diameter. Unfortunately, in regard to astronomical research, the ichthyosaurus would appear to have passed the greater portion of its time under water, and in a dim, though scarcely religious light. Still the creature must occasionally have raised its head above the water, especially when the mantle of night was spread over the earth. At such times, what a glorious scene must the heavens have displayed to this large-eyed reptile! For each star the modern astronomer can see, the ancient ichthyosaurus must have seen hundreds if not thousands. Instead of some three thousand stars, it must have seen hundreds of thousands if not millions of suns all at one grand view. Perhaps it did not care much for them. As it paddled along, snorting on its way for want of thought, it probably paid much more attention to conveniently juicy objects of prey than to the 'celestial objects for common telescopes' which must have been easily within the range of its uncommon vision. Its cranium corresponded by no means in capacity with the light-gathering power of its goggling eyes; and three millions of suns would be less interesting than a couple of succulent mouthfuls to a creature which probably could not count up to three. But we do not lose interest in the Rosse telescope because it thinks nothing of all the wonders it reveals.

There is something almost pathetic in the poverty of the picture which the actual eyesight of the astronomer can see compared with that over which his mental vision ranges. He speaks of hundreds of millions of stars. Now, in the course of a life of

observation a Herschel may actually see many millions of those remote suns. But he can only get piecemeal views of the glories of the star-depths. A space as large as the moon covers on the sky is a very large field for the telescope to show at a single view, and of such spaces the visible vault of the heavens contains between eighty and ninety thousand. Imagine the study of some grand masterpiece of the painter's art in a correspondingly piecemeal fashion! How could an adequate idea be formed of its real beauty and perfection? Yet in reality even this comparison hardly presents the full difficulty of the astronomer's task in attempting to survey the vault of heaven. He adds field to field (telescopic fields of view) slowly and painfully, and under ever-varying conditions: but so vast is the task that ere it can be half finished—at least if the survey is to be exact—the night comes when the astronomer can work no more. Others take up the unfinished survey; and the grand scene presented by the heavens has thus not only to be surveyed piecemeal but by many different observers, each one of whom has his idiosyncrasies of imagination, his peculiarities of mental vision.

It would never have occurred to the astronomers of old that such difficulties as these might be in part overcome by constructing an artificial retina for the telescopic eye—a retina keener to receive, and far fitter to retain and record, the details of the heavenly sky-scape. Still less would it have been supposed that, when the limits of telescopic vision seemed reached, a sudden development of its powers would be obtained, a development to which we can hardly see any limit. By the substitution of an artificial eye for the natural one, man has at length been enabled to surpass the large-eyed ichthyosaurus in his range of vision. He had already learned to see into depths which even two twelve-inch eyes could not have reached. But now he has found a way of recording in unmistakably trustworthy fashion all that his far-ranging telescopes can show him, and—here is the chief wonder—a great deal more!

The telescope had increased in power, generation after generation, until Sir David Brewster's idea seemed confirmed that we might fairly expect every period of thirty years to bring us news of some great step in telescope-construction. But much more than this time has passed since the world was astonished by the daring of the last Earl of Rosse in attempting the construction of a reflecting telescope two yards in diameter and forty feet in length.

That monstrous eye directed to the star depths had theoretically a light-gathering power surpassing at least sixty thousand times that of the natural eye!

No refracting telescope can ever have anything like that power. (Not to be unintelligible to any, through the use of technical terms, we explain that a reflecting telescope is one in which light is gathered by a large curved mirror at whose surface the light is reflected, while in a refracting telescope light is gathered by a large lens of glass through which the light passes. In each case the light falling on a large surface is deflected to a point; and the larger the light-gathering surface of course the greater the luminosity of each such point, and the greater the magnifying power which can be used without undue dilution of the light.) For when we make a very large glass for a telescope of this kind, we must give it a certain degree of thickness, or it will break under its own weight. And if we made such a glass six feet across, like the mirror of the Rosse telescope, it would have to be so thick that no light would pass through it. Now obviously it is useless to collect large quantities of light which will be entirely absorbed by the very lens which gathers them.

But if there is thus an obvious limit to the increase of telescopes with large glass lenses for light-gathering, there is equally a limit, though in another way, to the increase of telescopes with large mirrors, whether metallic or of glass silvered. Indeed, that limit had been already passed in the case of the great Rosse telescope—which was not only a gigantic reflector but a gigantic failure. To the mirror as to the lens¹ a certain thickness is necessary, even though the mirror be made of a hard metal. It might seem that this could not matter, since the mirror is not to be looked through. But an immense mass of metal like the mirror of the great Rosse telescope can play all manner of undesirable tricks. Placed in varying positions it will vary in shape, and the most delicate accuracy of shape is essential for a mirror of the kind. This fault is itself fatal in the case of a mirror so large as that of the Rosse telescope, which like its great (though smaller) predecessor, the four-feet mirror of Sir W.

¹ We use throughout the word 'lens,' but in reality the large glass of a telescope, called the object glass because it is the one towards the object looked at, is composed of two large lenses, one of flint glass, the other of crown glass, so shaped and adjusted as to correct optical defects which quite baffled the astronomers who used the old single-lens telescopes.

Herschel, 'bunched' stars into cocked hats,' and at times turned even such characteristic objects as Saturn into mere unmeaning splotches of light. But there are others. For instance, a long time has to pass before so large a mass of metal follows a change of temperature in the surrounding air; so that nearly always the air near the mirror would be either warmer or colder than the air in the rest of the tube; the effect of such differences of temperature would of course be disastrous so far as definition was concerned.

And apart from mere difficulties of construction, large telescopes are not nearly so effective in the survey of the heavens as readers of books on popular astronomy are apt to imagine. They are very cumbrous, though of late that defect has been in large degree overcome. A more serious fault is that except in unusually favourable conditions of the air they cannot be used with their full power. It must be remembered that the larger the eye the greater is the quantity of air between any point of a distant object and the eye which comes into play, to blur and even to distort the object as seen on the retina. If we choose to employ an eye six feet across we have an immense cylinder of air, many miles long, and six feet wide throughout, between the eye and any star, or planet, or point of the sun or moon at which we are looking; and all this air is at work, with currents passing hither and thither, through all of which we have to look, in examining objects with a telescope of that size. When the air is very very still, only, can we thus look with any advantage. Usually it is far better to close a large part of the gigantic pupil of the telescopic eye. And this applies to much smaller telescopes, insomuch that the astronomer usually keeps a supply of flat brass rings, so graduated in size that he can diminish the opening of his telescope to any degree that he may find necessary.

Thus an astronomer having a two-feet telescope will generally have to reduce it to one foot or even less of opening, and will perhaps not once in a month be able to use its full power.

This, let us note in passing, leads to a rather annoying laziness on the part of many astronomers who possess, or have been supplied with, very powerful telescopes. People often ask what this astronomer or that, who once delighted the scientific world with his discoveries, has been doing since he had been put in command of a much larger telescope than he had used in his former work. The fact generally is that he has been waiting for

opportunities of using the full power of his grand telescope, and so losing multitudinous opportunities for such work as he had done with his smaller one. It seems scarcely worth while to apply a two-foot telescope to such work as a one-foot telescope could do equally well or better; besides, he would get no thanks or credit: so he leaves the work undone.

Such at least is our own way of explaining the unquestionable fact that several observers whom we could mention were much more productive labourers in the field of astronomical research when they used small telescopes than they have been since they were provided with large ones.

Where could the astronomer look for increase of space-penetrating power in the face of such difficulties as these? He could get no more powerful telescopes, nor hope much from making telescopes better though no larger. He could not escape the influence of our own air at stations near the sea-level, nor expect much from climbing great heights, where, though the air is somewhat clearer, the difficulties of observation are much increased, and storms of most destructive and trying nature often prevail. Nor was anything to be hoped from the discovery of new optical laws; for indeed it had been the study of optical laws which had disclosed the limits which bound telescopic survey.

And what made the matter more provoking was that the invention of spectroscopic analysis, while enabling astronomers to obtain such information as formerly they had not hoped to obtain, had simply increased their zest for telescopic survey. We may say, in fact, that by means of the spectroscope we can determine the structure of every star or other self-luminous object we can see with the telescope, but we cannot analyse the structure of orbs which we cannot see even with the mightiest telescopes yet made or ever likely to be made by man.

Who would have thought that the art of taking pictures by the aid of light, which Niepce, Daguerre, Talbot, John Herschel, and others, invented almost but yesterday, would have come to the aid of the astronomer eagerly longing to look farther out into the star depths, and to obtain clearer views of objects already within the range of his telescopes? Yet so it has been. The stonily staring Daguerreotypes, which were regarded rather as curiosities than as portraits half a century ago, contained—unpromising though they seemed—the promise of astronomical discoveries such as even a perfect telescope of the size of Lord Rosse's could not achieve.

Photography has two great advantages over ordinary vision in the work of astronomical survey. Regarding the photographic plate as replacing the retina of the human eye, and receiving instead of it the telescopic image of a heavenly body, we may say that this photographic eye can do three things which the human eye cannot do:—

1. The photographic eye can see, on occasion, in an instant of time in which the human eye could not even begin to see.

2. The photographic eye can, on occasion, see more and more by steady staring for many minutes, nay for many hours in succession, where the human eye, if it cannot see in a few seconds, may as well give up looking.

3. The photographic eye can record what it sees in an instant of time, or in several hours of time, as occasion may require, in a perfectly trustworthy manner, unaffected by any theories, hypotheses, or fancies, as to what the object looked at is, or may be, or ought to be.

Observe how these qualities of the photographic eye promise to help the astronomer.

In the first place, when observing the sun, the astronomer is all the time troubled by the movements taking place in our air. There is a constant fluctuation by which, when a powerful telescope is used, the image of an object is so blurred and confused, as far as the finer details are concerned, that we see these as we might see the delicate details of a very fine engraving through the disturbed air above a heated stove. Now in reality this blurring arises from the combination of a multitude of different pictures. At any given instant a view is presented which though it may be slightly distorted in details is perfectly clear; but immediately another takes its place, also perfectly clear and only slightly distorted in details; the distortion in one view being different, however, from the distortion in the other, the two combine into a view which is not clear. In the course of a single second hundreds of different views are thus seen, and these are combined into a single blurred view. For though in the case of an object of moderate brightness the tenth of a second may be about the duration of a visual impression, yet in observing the sun even when his light is softened by one or other of the various devices employed for the purpose by astronomers, the successive visual impressions certainly last at least a full second.

The reader must not fall into the mistake of supposing that

the image of the sun seen in the ordinary way through a telescope is blurred and confused so that the details of spots cannot be quite clearly seen. Under ordinary conditions the features described in the books of astronomy can be well seen even with large telescopes in which the atmospheric fluctuations are greatly magnified. It is the minute details which escape the observer, unless the conditions are altogether exceptional, and even then there is always some fluctuation, and these details of structure can only be seen as it were by momentary flashes.

To show that this is so we need only consider the case of Nasmyth's 'willow-leaves.' Nasmyth supposed he had detected a number of bright interlacing objects, shaped like willow-leaves, all over the sun's surface. They were willow-leaves on a rather large scale, being two or three hundred miles wide and several thousand miles long! Sir John Herschel accepted Nasmyth's description as correct, though all his own observations, as well as his father's, had failed to reveal these marvellous objects. In Herschel's 'Outlines of Astronomy' there is an elaborate picture of many hundreds of the interlacing bright willow-leaves with dark spots where the reticulations leave uncovered spaces. But in reality the solar willow-leaves thus shown over the general surface of the sun are only optical illusions. Instead of bright reticulations with dark spots, the sun's surface shows dark reticulations with bright spots. Yet long after Nasmyth had announced his supposed discovery, the matter remained in dispute because astronomers were unable to decide what they actually saw—so blurred and confused were the delicate details in question.

The photographic eye of science, had it then been directed to the sun, would have settled the question in very much less than a second, in fact, the very rapidity of its glance at the sun would have made its view of the matter decisive. At the observatory of M. Janssen, at Meudon, pictures of the sun are taken with such rapidity that each part of the solar image rests on the sensitive surface of the plate for less than one two-thousandth part of a second. Here we imagine a reader saying that *this*, at any rate, cannot be possible, because the two-thousandth part of a second is far too short a period to be measured. As a mere matter of fact, Wheatstone and Foucault have measured much less than the two-thousandth, even so little as the five hundred-thousandth part of a second. But in Janssen's photographic work, the passage of the slide through which the sun's light passed occupied perhaps as

much as the tenth of a second. Since, however, only about the two-hundredth part of the entire width of the slide was open, each part of the field over which the slide swept received the solar rays only for the time we have named; and the solar image occupied the whole width of the field.

In the pictures obtained by Janssen, although the telescopic power is far less than that which astronomers have applied to the sun, the solar 'rice-grains' which had only displaced the solar willow-leaves after a long struggle among telescopists, are perfectly distinct. We may be said to see more of the sun, in thus viewing it at second hand, by aid of the photographic eye of science, than Sir William Herschel saw during all the many years of his long observing career. Yet beside his largest telescope the instrument used by Janssen at Meudon would be like a child beside a giant.

But though the promise of discovery by means of the swiftly seeing eye of photography may be great, it seems small compared with what we may hope for from the power which the photographic eye possesses of staring steadfastly at an object until, after hours perhaps of contemplation, details come into view which would not be shown to ordinary human vision using a telescope ten times stronger than that to which the photographic eye has been applied. Nay it is not going at all too far to say that in this way the photographic eye will reveal what the human eye, no matter how aided by telescopic power, can never avail to see.

There is nothing to be explained in considering this method of using photography. All that has to be done is to direct a telescope of adequate strength to the celestial region to be surveyed, to let the optical image fall on a duly sensitised dry plate, and to keep the telescope moving with perfect uniformity so as to correct the effect of the earth's rotational movement, by which otherwise the image would not only be shifted, but would presently be carried clean off the photographic field.

Observe now what promise there is in the new method of research. There seems scarcely any limit to the delicacy and sensitiveness of photographic plates. Already the movements of a galloping horse, of an express train, nay even of a cannon-ball, have been recorded by photography. Every increase of sensitiveness means, of course, an increase of space-penetrating power for the photographic eye. Then next, the qualities of telescopes for work of this sort admit of being greatly increased. Our

telescopes have nearly all been made hitherto for ordinary vision, and the human eye observes chiefly with rays rather different from those selected by the photographic eye. Hitherto opticians have directed very little attention to the preparation of telescopes for photographic as distinguished from ordinary observing work. But this is far from being all. The steadiness with which telescopes may be poised, and the accuracy with which they may be swayed by clockwork, are daily being increased by ingeniously devised mechanism. Formerly it was thought a difficult task to keep a telescope upon an object for an hour. Now the necessary exactness of direction can be maintained for three or four hours at a stretch. And there seems absolutely no reason for doubting that hereafter the telescope may be directed, night after night, on precisely the same celestial region, and maintained throughout the night on the same region, until at last that region has been gazed on steadfastly by the photographic eye for thirty or forty hours in succession.

If instead of considering what may be, we direct our thoughts to what has been done, we find still more obvious reasons for hoping great things from this method of employing the photographic eye.

We do not dwell on the photographs of the moon and planets obtained even so late as ten or twelve years ago. Compared with the kind of work we are dealing with now these may be regarded as among the early failures of photography. But already, though success only began to be achieved about a dozen years ago, the triumphs of the new method have been so remarkable as to leave no doubt about the future of celestial photography.

In the sword of the giant Orion there is a streak of misty light, visible even to the naked eye on a clear dark night, which has shown more and more detail as telescopes of greater and greater power have been turned upon it. But already photography has shown more in this object than has been seen through the most powerful telescope in the ordinary way. For one hour and a half the late Dr. Henry Draper kept the giant eye of his telescope turned steadfastly upon this marvellous mass of misty light, whose wisps extend from the middle star of the belt down to the lowest star of the sword; and a picture of the nebula was the result which far surpasses in value all the drawings yet made by astronomers. Since Draper's early and lamented death, Mr. Common, following in the same path with a more powerful telescope and more

delicately sensitised plates, has obtained an even finer picture with only half an hour's exposure. It is clear that much higher magnifying power may be employed, with exposures of three or four hours to make up for the diminished telescopic light. Nay, in the tropical regions, where Orion shines for nine or ten hours,¹ still longer exposures may be given. Yet even in the photographs obtained by Draper and Common, stars show which the very telescope used for obtaining the photographs would not show to ordinary vision.

Recently this method has been applied with singular success by the Brothers Henry in France. They have photographed field after field of stars in the richest regions of the Milky Way, showing stars so minute that telescopes far higher in power would be required to show them in the usual way, than is the instrument used by MM. Henry for the photographic eye. In this case photography has not only done the work of seeing and charting, but also of engraving. From the negative, self-pictured by the stars, have been obtained zincographs by the usual process, which are in reality blocks engraved by the stars themselves, aided only by their fellow star, our own sun. In the May number of the scientific journal *Knowledge*, for example, there is an engraving showing more than two thousand stars, yet the block from which this engraving has been printed has never been touched by graver made with human hands.

Even this is not all. When surveying the Pleiades the photographic eye discovered nebulous wisps clinging around two of the well-known group of seven stars, and though one of these nebulous objects had been observed several years ago, its existence had been doubted by many, while that of the other had not been even suspected. In effecting this discovery the photographic eye detected a new proof of the theory recently advanced that nebulous patches in the star-depths are not external star-systems, but part of our own galaxy—for how otherwise could we explain the close clinging of these nebulous wisps around stars in the Pleiad group?

Can we wonder if astronomers should already boldly entertain the thought of making a complete survey of the heavens by means of photography. Admiral Mouchez has shown that in the course

¹ Orion shines as long in our skies as in the tropics—namely, about twelve hours; but his daily course is so slanted that he is most of the time very low down.

of ten years fully fifteen millions of stars might be made to record their exact position and true relative brightness in a series of large photographic charts! Nothing done by man since astronomy was a science can be compared with such a work as this, which yet might be well accomplished in a decade of years.

But even all this, wonderful as it is, seems less impressive than what has been done, and what astronomers are even now planning to do, in applying the photographic eye of science to analysing the structure of remote suns. Already they have made the waves of light from many of the leading stars record their story on the tiny shore of photographic film, after journeying millions of millions of miles through space. But now a complete survey is to be made in this way. A giant eye so constructed that not only will it gather, but it will sift, the light from multitudes of stars at once, will be directed in succession towards different parts of the heavens. For an hour at each view will this monstrous eye, more wonderful by far than the ichthyosaurian eye with which we began, gaze analysingly on many hundreds of stars at once, leaving on record at the close of its survey the photographic spectra of all those stars, by which the elements present in them, nay the very condition in which these elements exist will be written down in letters and words which (for the astronomer) there is no mistaking. Truly a wonderful era of astronomical research is now beginning. Probably the next half-century will reveal more about the millions of millions of tenants of interstellar space than all the years which have elapsed since Hipparchus, noticing a new star, was led to form the first of all known star-catalogues.



